



## Elimination of unqualified additions that distort the silhouette of the historical places: Artuklu example

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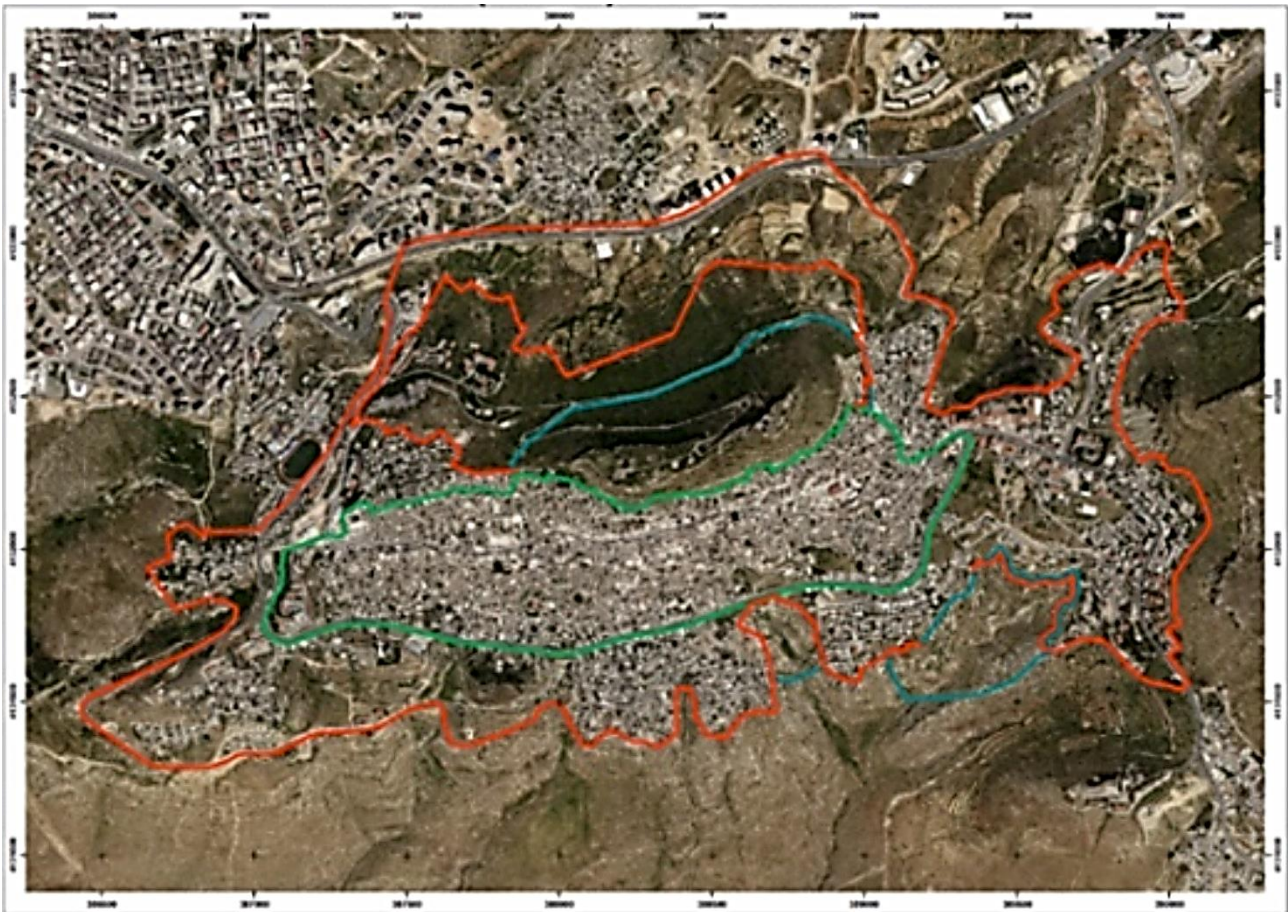
### Abstract

The Mardin-Artuklu urban protected area has a unique historical texture, topography and sociological richness, which is rarely seen in the world, with its vibrant urban texture that has continued in the long historical process. The increase in the number of reinforced concrete structures and add-on techniques over time in this well-established residential area has led to the deterioration of the qualitative stone texture. These deteriorations have increased especially after the 1950s and have led to its present appearance. Due to the use of reinforced concrete, the process of deterioration in the historical-urban texture has manifested itself with many negative effects. In the process of being a livable example of the concept of "tourism attraction", which is mentioned in the national strategy plans, especially in the development and other upper-scale plans of the area, reinforced concrete structures constitute one of the most important problems in its inclusion in the permanent heritage list. In this study, it is aimed to examine the importance of the demolition of reinforced concrete structures and their annexes, which are not suitable for the historical and cultural texture within the Artuklu Urban Site Boundaries in the Artuklu District of Mardin City, in revealing the historical texture of the area, through various examples in the Artuklu Site Management model management plan. In the current study, archival research, observational detection, photographic documentation and interview methods were used to determine the physical and socioeconomic contributions of demolition works. As a result, the importance of the demolition of the reinforced concrete structure and its annexes in revealing the historical texture of the area is examined with some examples, and various suggestions are presented according to the system in the management plan.

## 1. Introduction

Site Management is defined with the terms "management area" and "management plan" in the Law No. 2863 on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, with the update in 2004. The term area management refers to a roadmap that expresses the analysis of the current situation of the area, the development of the predictable situations that will affect the future state of the area and the policy objectives to be carried out in a sustainable concept of protection, and the monitoring of the implementation processes [1-8]. It is aimed to make sustainable policies for the protection of the areas to be implemented with the site management plans to be made in archaeological sites, urban sites and ruins, to protect them with a new understanding and to evaluate them. The site management policies to be implemented should be carried out by embodying them on a common axis through

coordinated communication with local governments, other public institutions, non-governmental organizations, etc. The implementation of the strategic plans to be determined can also be achieved with this coordination [6-8]. For this reason, gradual planning (short, medium and long term) in the area where the site management plan will be made and their implementation are stated in the plans of relevant institutions, organizations and non-governmental organizations [9-11]. Site management plans in the world and in Turkey should also include recommendations for the needs of local people regarding the site [12-16]. In order to obtain predictable results in these decisions, practical applications of public institutions and organizations and other stakeholders, especially the local people living in the area, and economic sustainability and financial support should continue uninterruptedly [17]. In this context, Artuklu Urban Protected Area is one of the areas where a management plan is needed in recent years. In this context, a mutual cooperation protocol was signed between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Mardin Metropolitan Municipality, and the necessary studies were initiated for the preparation of the Artuklu Urban Site Management Plan, including the Artuklu Urban Site and related areas. The Artuklu (Mardin) Site Management Plan Boundaries were determined with the Authority's Approval of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism dated 12.02.2021 and numbered 1123378. The Artuklu (Mardin) Management Plan Planning Area is 446.74 Ha in total. Artuklu Site Management Plan, which is a strategic plan, differs from other plans in that it includes tourist carrying capacity and predictable visitor management plans, as well as preserving the cultural heritage in the area and suggesting methods. The most important issues included in the action plans in site management are that the city has a unique historical texture, topography and sociological richness within the scope of a rare city in the world with its lively urban texture that continues in the long historical process, and that it has recently lost this feature with the addition of various unqualified structures and add-ons to the historical texture (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Artuklu Site Management Plan Boundary

The old city center was declared as a historical site in 1979, and it was included in the Unesco World Heritage tentative list in 2000, while the old city center of Mardin was being renovated with the help of central and local government resources, on the other hand, on a neighborhood scale, were transformed with spatial attachments which of the majority of reinforced concrete structures were added to the historical buildings by the user. When the additions used in traditional buildings and today's add-ons are considered, it will be understood that it emerges as a product of vital comfort and concerns. However, the intertwining of traditional building and reinforced concrete structures causes a contrasting appearance. For this reason, the traditional texture and silhouette of the city is deteriorating. This architectural style, consisting of contrasts, developed organically and created a new form.

If we start from the stories about the articulation process of reinforced concrete add-ons to stone structures, which were created by daily life concerns, it will be seen that these life practices actually facilitate daily life and shape these forms of households according to themselves. In other words, the socio-cultural structure of Mardin and the change in this structure are part of the transformation. As can be seen in many periods of history in Mardin, the existence of extended families rather than the nuclear family structure and the effects of these families made it inevitable to make reinforced concrete or other additions. We provide this from the information obtained from the building users and the local people about the construction process of the reinforced concrete annexes during the registration process. Over time, the increase in the population of the household has enabled the articulation of different units within the house or the creation of independent areas, with the effect of ownership. These are in the form of opening and adding a new floor or section, or adding many stairs, WCs or kitchen-bathrooms to a building at different times.

In summary, with the increasing population, the stone houses, which are tried to be revised with reinforced concrete, are surrounded by daily living spaces away from historical and cultural concerns. Arrangements such as h-free brought with the revision zoning plans that support this have caused irreparable damage to the city, especially the silhouette. The increase in concrete buildings in the area called Yenişehir after 1990 has attracted the population in Old Mardin to more comfortable and livable alternative areas. Regarding the issues that contain the internal problems of the city, especially local governments, regarding the solution of this problem and other problems in the area, since the 2000s, there has been a planned plan for the solution of these problems by accelerating the activities of restoring the city's old silhouette, restoration, street rehabilitation and revitalization of idle bazaars and settlements. In this context, other stakeholder institutions, especially the Mardin Metropolitan Municipality, continue to work hard to reveal the silhouette of the Historical City of Mardin. In this study, it is aimed to examine the importance of the demolition of reinforced concrete structures and their annexes, which are not suitable for the historical and cultural texture within the Artuklu Urban Site Boundaries in the Artuklu District of Mardin Province, in revealing the historical texture of the area, through various examples in the Artuklu Site Management model management plan.

## **2. Material and Method**

In the current study; reinforced concrete structures to be demolished in the Urban Site were determined, and the physical applications were observed and photographed on site. In order to understand how the current situation of the area was before the implementation, photographs were obtained from the Mardin Metropolitan Municipality KUDEB unit about the pre-implementation conditions of the spaces. The collected photographs were examined in comparison with the current situation photographs of the spaces. It has been determined that the removal of unqualified additions on the buildings, the changes in the general appearance and texture of the city. The physical and visual-aesthetic current conditions of the reinforced concrete buildings and annexes to be demolished/constructed were comparatively examined.

In the second stage, various interviews were received from local residents regarding the settlements in the Artuklu Urban Site. In addition to interviews with 22 households and 28 residents of the urban site, interviews were also received with Kuddeb employees regarding the process of clearing the Urban Site from reinforced concrete annexes and revealing the historical urban texture. The advantages and disadvantages related to the contribution of demolitions to the city and the settlement problems of the residents in the urban protected area were discussed with the interviewees. Interview answers were recorded and analyzed by coding method. The study, which is based on a participatory approach technique based on social evaluations, consists of open-ended questions and evaluations. The answers given by the grouped subjects were evaluated separately.

### **2.1. Main basis for demolition of unconventional buildings within the scope of the site management plan**

The change and transformation that emerged with modernization takes a faster form today and makes its impact felt. As a result, the disappearance of residential areas and the speed of their destruction continue in the same way. These rapid destructions on architectural structures cause great damage to the historical and cultural identity texture of a city and leave the most important elements of the city in danger. These structures, which are historical documents, contain important features of the culture, art, architecture and social texture of their period and carry them to the future. Therefore, it is important to protect these areas, which are important parts of cities. Mardin-Artuklu Urban Site is an important area that reflects and carries its historical, cultural and architectural characteristics in its original form and spirit. It is important to preserve the texture of site in the Site Management Plan. A view of the Mardin is presented in [Figure 2](#).



**Figure 2.** Mardin (1918)

Conserving and carrying to the future the complementary structures and elements of different periods that constitute the unique texture and identity of the city, which are located within the Mardin Urban Site and Artuqid Site Management Boundaries, are related to the assurance and implementation of the Universal Criteria and National Criteria. Authenticity, which is considered as a criterion for conservation management in the international arena, includes the definition of being original. Various researches are carried out based on identity, locality and their continuity, which have become important in recent years. Local Identity is a general concept that specifically refers to small-scale areas. It is the concept that conveys positive statements about the place where they live, especially the positive living space, to the local people living here. When we look at the Artuklu Urban Site, the features of this place are unique and separate from other places. All of the differences in Artuklu constitute the local identity of the city. In addition, all these qualities of the city represent the spirit of this place, and the spirit of this place contains its own meaning and memory. The entirety of the images of the city can be evaluated under the concept of "local identity". Therefore, the removal of the city from reinforced concrete structures will ensure the emergence of local identity elements as a whole.

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1. Demolition process of unqualified additions in the urban site within the scope of the site management plan**

Mardin Province, Artuklu District, Mardin Center Conservation Master Plan was approved by the Council Decision dated 08.01.2020 and numbered 2020/10, the plan consists of an area of 340 hectares in total, including the Urban Protected Area (100 Hectares) and the Interaction Area (240 Hectares). Mardin, one of the most strategic and important cities of Northern Mesopotamia in the historical process, is an important city that reveals this aspect in terms of its current city center. In the city center, which has survived under the influence of many different cultures, religions and ethnic groups, this rich cultural diversity constitutes the most important element of values regarding the transfer of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage to the future, which carries the traces of the communities. We come across examples of architectural structures, which are the most important of the material cultural elements of various cultural layers, in Artuklu City Center. The richness of buildings with monumental features such as churches, monasteries, mosques, madrasas, Turkish baths, fountains and abbara from different periods constitute the basic texture of the city. In addition to these, mansions, shops and houses are important examples of buildings. Most of these structures are registered as registered cultural assets within the scope of the law numbered 2863 and constitute the examples of the traditional urban fabric of Mardin. Reinforced concrete structures, which are the opposite of these building groups and exhibit unqualified features, spoil both the originality and silhouette of the city.

In the process, the multi-storey construction of reinforced concrete structures in the Urban Protected Area was contrary to the texture of the historical city. This problem is tried to be done with a sustainable policy within the scope of the "Historical Mardin Transformation Project". With this project, many reinforced concrete structures and add-ons in the urban protected area are demolished and the texture of the city is provided. In addition, some reports and determinations have been prepared by the Mardin Metropolitan Municipality in order to reveal the historical and cultural identity of the city, to preserve the traditional structures and to revitalize the city in terms of tourism. In these determinations, 240 reinforced concrete structures and attachments were prioritized and presented to the Şanlıurfa Cultural Heritage Preservation Regional Board. The Board took a decision on the demolition of these 240 buildings and contributed to the removal of the reinforced concrete structures and annexes identified within the scope of the "Mardin Urban Transformation and Development Project" from the urban protected area. Although these structures are generally concentrated in the areas within the scope of the

pedestrianization project of the 1st Street and the Revitalization of the Historical Bazaars, in addition to the 240 structures that can be evaluated within the scope of demolition in many parts of the city, approximately 1000 reinforced concrete additions that are contrary to the historical texture have been identified. To begin with, the reinforced concrete structure consisting of 3 blocks and 5 floors in each block, known as the Old Public Works Lodgings among the public, located across the Mardin stadium, and the 4-storey Old Ziraat Bank Lodging in Şar Neighborhood and the 3 floors of the 5-storey building next to it, which are reinforced concrete, were expropriated and the reinforced concrete annexes were demolished. In addition, the demolition of the YSE lodgings located on Yeniyol Street and in the area designed as a parking lot in the KAIP (Conservation Plan) and the 2 floors of reinforced concrete of the 4-storey building that disrupts the silhouette of Ulu Mosque have been completed. The demolition of the structures determined by the Conservation Implementation and Inspection Bureau (KUDEB) affiliated to the Department of Zoning and Urbanization is carried out in a controlled manner. As long as the necessary financial funds and appropriations are available, the demolition of all contrary structures that disrupt the historical and cultural silhouette of the urban site will continue. In the project carried out by Reinforced Concrete and Mardin Metropolitan Municipality, the demolition of reinforced concrete annexes and structures is to reveal the historical and traditional city texture. Many buildings and landmarks were destroyed on the grounds that they distorted the silhouette, and these demolitions are carried out in accordance with the rules within the framework of the decision and recommendations of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Board (Figure 3-11). Demolition work is still ongoing (Figure 12).

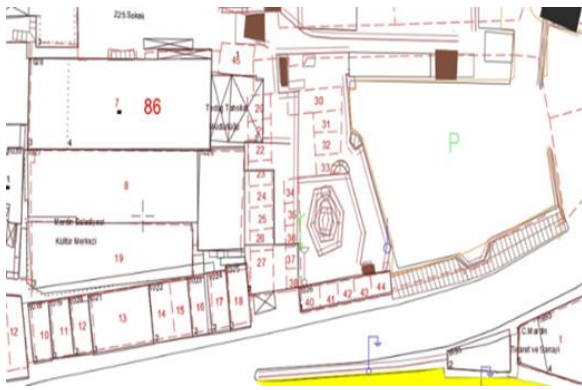


Figure 3. Example of Building Demolished/To be Demolished within the Scope of the Artuklu Site Management Plan



Figure 4. Example of a Building Demolished/To be Demolished within the Scope of the Artufacted Site Management Plan

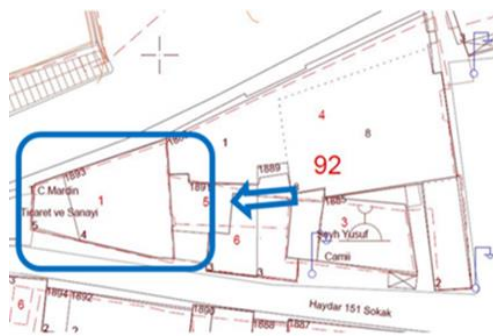


Figure 5. Examples of Structures to be Demolished/To be Demolished within the Scope of the Artuklu Site Management Plan



Figure 6. Example of a Building Demolished/To be Demolished within the Scope of the Artufacted Site Management Plan



Figure 7. Example of Building Demolished/To be Demolished within the Scope of the Artufacted Site Management Plan



Figure 8. Example of a Building Demolished/To be Demolished within the Scope of the Artuklu Site Management Plan

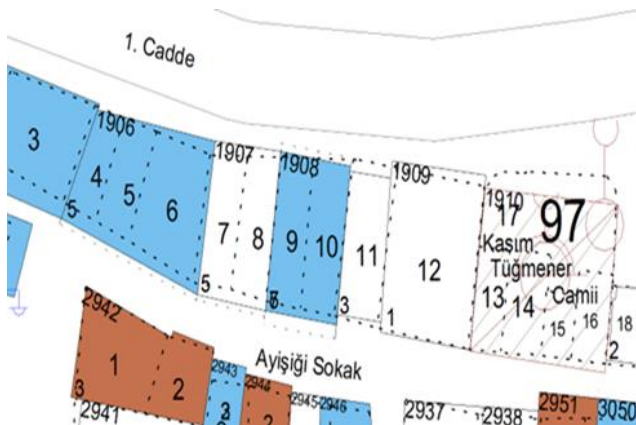


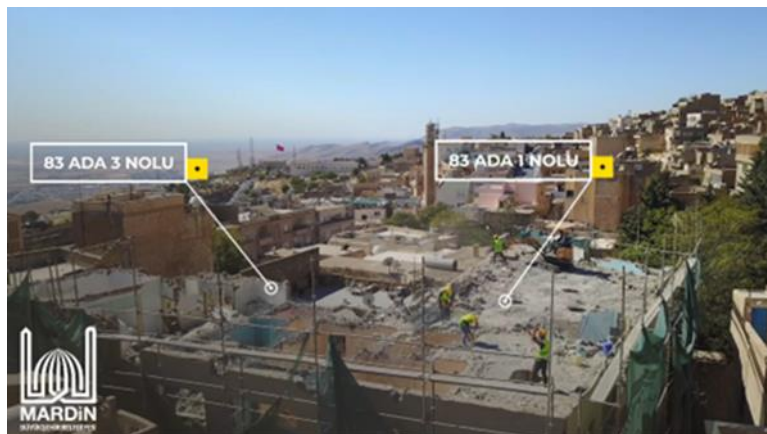
Figure 9. Example of Structure to be Demolished/To be Demolished within the Scope of the Artuklu Site Management Plan



**Figure 10.** Artuklu, Şar Neighborhood, Urban Protected Area, Former Public Works Lodgings



**Figure 11.** Artuklu, Şar Neighborhood, Urban Protected Area Building Distorting the Silhouette of the Ulu Mosque



**Figure 12.** Demolition example Mardin Metropolitan Municipality - Kudeb Archive

Some add-ons with period annexes were designed in accordance with the conservation plan. The reason for this is to preserve the architectural structure of the city. The fact that the ground and lowest floors of some reinforced concrete houses are covered with plaster has caused them to be described as historical masonry buildings. In such structures, the historical texture is reached after the plaster is removed, making it easier to remove the reinforced concrete additions. The aim here is to make it look like medieval history. Converting the

whole texture to its medieval state will undoubtedly make a big impact and ensure sustainability. In the demolition interventions in the area, the teams consisting of experts related to the area carry out the demolition in accordance with the rules, based on the decisions taken by the Cultural Heritage Preservation Board (Figure 13-15).



**Figure 13.** Before and after demolition of 45 block 5 parcels



**Figure 14.** Before and after demolition of block 83, parcel 1



**Figure 15.** Before and after demolition block 69, parcel 24-25



Another project carried out by the Mardin Metropolitan Municipality within the boundaries of the Artuklu Urban Site is street rehabilitation projects. The façade improvements of the routes preferred by the local people and tourists, in particular, aim to make the city suitable for its essence with the demolition of the areas. These works are carried out by making the facades, doors and windows of the buildings suitable for the texture with simple repairs. Cement-based joints and plasters on these facades are properly removed and the streets are transformed into originality. In addition to these, the concrete and briquette walls that were added later were removed and stone walls suitable for the texture were built instead. The metal or reinforced concrete poles located in the Urban Protected Area were also pulled underground to remove the visual pollution. The side street, which starts from the Diyarbakır Kapı Mahallesi route and goes towards the Mardin Museum, has been included in the tourism route as a cultural street.

### **3.2. Socioeconomic consequences of demolition process of reinforced concrete structures in the urban protected area within the scope of the site management plan**

As a result of the evaluation of the interviews with the residents of the Urban Protected Area, it was determined that the removal of the reinforced concrete structures and annexes against the texture in the Mardin Urban Protected Area was satisfactory, and that the local governments managed to include this project in their strategic plan and this work was positive in maintaining the service flow. It was concluded that the satisfaction rate of the shopkeepers and city residents living in Upper Mardin, that is, the urban protected area, was 94%, and that most of the entire population was satisfied. Based on these results, it is concluded that the historical texture of the city has emerged and tourism carrying and input capacities have improved. This shows the conclusion that the demolition work is fit for purpose.

## **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

In this study, the process of clearing the Historical Mardin Urban Site and the historical area, which is defined as archaeological and whose boundaries are specified in the Artuklu Site Management Plan, from reinforced concrete annexes is mentioned. The contributions of these practices to the historical and cultural texture of the city are investigated. Archival research, observational detection, photographic documentation and interview methods were used to determine the physical and socioeconomic contributions of demolition works.

In the findings obtained as a result of the study; It has been determined that the removal of the reinforced concrete structures and add-ons in the Mardin Urban Protected Area, which is contrary to the texture, is pleasing, and the local administrations have succeeded in solving this problem. Based on these results, it has been concluded that the historical texture of the city has emerged and tourism carrying and input capacities have developed. This shows that the demolition work is fit for purpose. In addition, another determination obtained in the results of the study; The negative feedback regarding the physical appearance of the city regarding the reinforced concrete structures in the Mardin urban site is that this issue was included in the plan and that many historical buildings were restored on the axis of tourism economy. In addition, the characterization of "reinforced concrete structures and annexes" as "unqualified concrete blocks" in the Conservation Development Plan has created a legal basis at the institutional level and it is seen that the demolition process of reinforced concrete structures has accelerated as soon as possible. The insistence of this issue in the Management Plan also provided the formation of the necessary motivation process, and the destruction economy created by this process enabled many people in the city to become an economic source of income.

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### **Author contributions:**

**Lale Karataş:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Software **Aydın Alptekin:** Data curation, Writing-Original draft preparation, Software, Validation. **Murat Yakar:** Visualization, Investigation, Writing-Reviewing and Editing.

### **Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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