ON ABUSE OF THE TERM 'ATTRACTION'

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There are some sides of ancient Indo-European studies which have long been more neglected by most modern scholars than they should be: these are semantics and 'stylistic syntax', including, *inter alia*, diction, style and order of words. It is true that a considerable part of the texts on which our studies must be based is traditional, or even to some extent exclusive and artificial, exhibiting syntactic and stylistic peculiarities which seem to have been subject to hypertrophy or to constitute the result of a one-sided development. That does not however mean that they are, all of them, abnormalities and, in principle, inaccessible to modern linguistic research. Speaking of modern research I do not in the first place intend to say that any new-fangled structuralist idea should, by way of experiment, be tested on Homer, the Veda or the Gothic Bible, but rather that, generally speaking, the results reached by the application of approved linguistic methods—no matter whether they date from before or after 1900, 1930 or 1950—to comparable fields of inquiry in the domain of living languages should, by applying similar but adapted methods, be made fruitful to a better understanding of some most important aspects of the ancient literatures. As far as semantics are concerned, the methods to be adopted in this difficult province of linguistic science—which should by no means be regarded as identical with the study of the change of lexical meanings—have in the course of the last decades been debated from various points of view, but classical scholarship can not be said to have contributed much to this discussion or to have derived much profit from its conclusions. Unfortunately enough 'meanings' and 'change of meaning' are, in the fields of the ancient languages, nowadays often discussed along the same lines of reasoning as fifty or seventy years ago. As to syntax and stylistics many teachers of Greek and Latin do not seem to have even now sufficiently assimilated the methods devised and the results reached by Wackernagel,1 Havers,2 Hofmann,3 Löfstedt,4 Marouzeau, not to mention their successors belonging to the younger generation. Through a curious *vis inertiae*, traditional explications based on grammatical principles and theories recognized in the past centuries always find supporters. Time-honoured explications and classifications, even when notoriously incompatible with the results of modern research, remain, if I am not mistaken, in daily use.

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2. See further on.
Many classical scholars are reluctant to give up traditional grammatical terminology even in those frequent cases in which their continued use is not only inconsistent with the present position of linguistic research but also likely to create various misconceptions. The inclination to apply a vague and traditional term to a variety of constructions which at first sight seem to have a striking characteristic in common may also lead to the undesirable consequence that important differences are overlooked.

The well-known term attraction may be quoted as a case in point. Covering a motley variety of syntactic phenomena it blurs out distinctions which are not only relevant as linguistic phenomena but may also be of some consequence for a perfect understanding of a passage; moreover, its continued application may prevent a student from investigating into the nature, function and origin of various phenomena. It is self-evident that the disadvantages of the thoughtless use of time-honoured terminology—which often reflects the pre-scientific, logical views of language in vogue before the XIXth century—only increase when these very terms are resorted to in a careless way or alternately with similar vague expressions. These remarks are, however, not to deny that even linguists of great repute sometimes like to adopt such easy, but incorrect terms. I for one would for instance hesitate to call constructions such as Plaut., Epid. 431 haec stultitias where the Dutch idiom is 'dit is dwaasheid' a case of attraction or to say that the pronoun should strictly speaking 'be in the neuter form', concluding that 'a change of gender' has taken place. In Sanskrit this concord in gender is the rule: asau ... mantraḥ 'that (Skt. masc.) is the advice'; ye tusāh sā tvak 'the husks, that (in Skt. feminine) is the skin'. Compare in Italian, questa è mia madre as against the French c'est ma mère and the Dutch dit is mijn moeder. In the ancient Iranian languages the demonstrative pronoun may be in the singular neuter or agree in gender with the predicate. In Greek also both possibilities are realized, the pronoun being in the neuter in definitions and in concord with the predicate when 'es sich um die Beschaffenheit des Gegenstandes handelt: τ ἄρτι τοί δίκη ἔστι θεον'. Although other ancient Indo-European languages seem to

5. Needless to say that this practice is stimulated by the many new photographic reprints of ancient books.
6. Thus in the Dutch school-grammar, P. V. Sormani, Kaegi's Grieksche grammatica, Groningen 1915, p. 113 attraction and assimilation are said to be synonymous.
9. Thus e.g. at the time, Max Müller, in Sacred Books of the East, I, Oxford 1879, preface, p. XXXVI.
10. One misses the point in limiting oneself to the remark that this construction is the more logical one (A. Ernout—F. Thomas, Syntaxe latine, Paris 1953, p. 131).
have preferred from the beginning the neuter form of the pronoun, so much is clear that the type of construction exemplified by *haec stultitias* must have been quite common in prehistoric times and was no doubt inherited in Latin and elsewhere. Why should we apply to it a terminology which suggests an incidental or occasional derailment, a more or less abnormal deviation from a general rule?

It would therefore seem advisable to restrict the use of this term to really exceptional or individual, mechanical deviations—Nepos 6, 4, 3 *postquam de suis rebus gestis . . . quae voluerat dixerat* (instead of *dixit*), . . . *tradidit*—and even then to consider the application of other terms, such as for instance perseveration or anticipation, which do more justice to the character of the constructions under discussion. As soon as these constructions are of some frequency one should, moreover, be extremely guarded in regarding some type or other as 'faulty'. If for instance Dr. Lagas were right in applying the term 'fault' to all phenomena of anticipation—e.g. Soph., *El.* 301 ὁ πάντες ἀναλίκεις ὤντος, ὁ πάντες βλάβη where Groeneboom expected ὁ πάντες δὲν βλάβη—or perseveration—e.g. Plaut., *Cas.* 975 *quid fecisti scipione aut quod habuisti pallium* (instead of *pallio*)—he obviously would have us believe that the works of the great classics abound in faulty constructions. We had better reserve this term for those rare cases in which an author used an expression or construction which in the milieu to which he belonged was felt to be a glaring mistake.

Whereas for instance the occasional occurrence of predicative vocatives such as Soph., *Ai.* 695 ὰ ἵ ὰ, Πάν Πάν, ὁ Πάν Πάν ἀλίκλαγκτε . . . φάνηθι—parallels of which occur in the Veda—can hardly be explained otherwise than by the assumption of a tendency to 'thoughtless' or mechanical perseveration—*peut-être l'écritain a-t-il eu le sentiment que l'adresse au vocatif, formant un tout, devait prendre dans tous ses termes les caractéristiques du vocatif*—there are indeed many other modes of expression which, while often overlooked or inadequately discussed by authors of

17. J. Humbert, *Syntaxe grecque*, Paris 1945, p. 288. Even then there are sometimes complications, e.g. in the rare Latin turn Cic., *Tusc.* 4, 28 *haec . . . proelñitas ad suum quadque genus*, instead of *h. p. culiusque a. s. g.*
modern handbooks of general linguistics, are in commentaries very frequently paraphrased by what the authors think to be their ‘normal’, i.e. logical equivalent. On closer examination, however, these paraphrases not rarely turn out to be redundancies and impediments to a right understanding of the constructions.

As is well known there are in Greek numerous instances of the phenomenon indicated by the unsuitable term ‘attraction of the relative pronoun’. When a sentence does not contain a correlative demonstrative pronoun and the relative clause is equivalent to a noun or pronoun in a particular case of the main clause, the relative clause often is in that case, also when its construction would have us expect to find another case. It would in my opinion be incorrect to continue explaining utterances such as Xen., Comm. 2, 9, 3 χαριζόμενον οὖσαν σοι ἀνδρὶ ‘showing favour to a man like you’ as having developed from the ‘complete and logical construction’ χαριζόμενον ἀνδρὶ οἶκος σου ἀλλ'. This construction—compare also A 262 ὡς γὰρ τοιοῦ ὅποιον ἀνέφει, ἀλλ' ὁ Ἰοτιθόνο ἔρχεται ἐπὶ Δρῦντα τε and many other examples—appears to be too usual to be regarded as occasioned, in every occurrence, by new, different, individual acts of ‘attraction’. Like expressions such as Eur., Hrcl. 659 πόλιν ὁς Χρυσήνας ἐνδιάμονα καὶ, in Latin, Ter., Ph. 591 f. hominem callidiorem vidi neminem quam Phormionem, it was no doubt often mechanically reproduced. It would appear to me that the degree of importance of, or of emphasis laid on, the groups introduced by the relative was one of the factors determining the degree of its grammatical independence. If there is no emphasis the tendency to ‘continue with the same case form’ (perseveration) may easily prevail; if the relative group is emphasized the nominative is likely to be, often beside other marks of emphasis, the expression of its greater importance and independence: Φ 108 οὖχ ὁ ὃς ὁς καὶ ἐγὼ . . . ἔρχεται τοῦτον ἀκόμη, ὃς καὶ ἐγὼ περὶ (even as I, notice the different translation!), ἀκομοῦµα Ἰόλλος καὶ, . . .

The so-called attraction (to what?) when a demonstrative pronoun is left unexpressed—e.g. Soph., El. 1048 οὐδὲν ὅν λέγω—is in my opinion likewise to be studied in connection with the degree of emphasis, in this


21. Which is, I am convinced, not completely equivalent to Ernout-Thomas' (o.c., p. 170) explication quam Phormio est.
case of that which is, or could be, the correlate. A demonstrative pronoun when not placed in relief is often omitted (*quem deus perdere vult prius dementat*); notice, for instance, the degree in emphasis between the Dutch *wie opstaat is z’n plaats kwijt* and *degene die opstaat is*... If there is emphasis, sentences of the type Τ 228 ἅλλα γρή γόνον μὲν καταθαλάμεν δὲς κε θάνην are the normal mode of expression, otherwise the relative—which then properly speaking is a determinative pronoun ‘he-who’—easily assumes the case-form required in the ‘principle clause’ from which the relative group syntactically forms part (in Dutch: *niets van wat ik zeg*). However, this construction may have provoked new cases of real perseveration (Aesch., Sept. 309 ὅθερ τε Διήρκατον, εὑτραφέστατον πῶμάτων / δοσών ἦσσον Ποσειδαν). 

If on the other hand a relative clause is comparatively independent—e.g. when it is explicative—a relative pronoun may in gender join not the antecedent but its predicate in the relative clause: Caes., B.G. 7, 68, 1 *Alesiam, quod est oppidum Mandubiorum, iter facere coepit.*

Phrases of the type Β 764 τὰς Εὐμηλοῖς ἔλαυνε ποδέκας ὄρνιθας δ'ς represent stereotyped appositional groups which are ‘re-inforced’ by an emphatical δς ‘thus’—which is etymologically related to the English and German *so*—and originally meant ‘...birds, so to say’ (‘like birds’) rather than cases of attraction or perseveration and ellipsis instead of a so-called original or rather fictive ‘them, like birds which go so’ (cf. Γ 2 ἰουν ὄρνιθας δς which has been explained ‘they went, birds (go) so’).

One might compare the parallel uses of the Sanskrit *iva* (from the pronominal stem *i*- ‘this’), which on the one hand helps to form phrases with ‘so to say, so, just so, just’ (e.g. Śatap. Br. 2, 5, 2, 14 ἀτυσὰν ἰβα γανάν κῆτια ‘after having made the barley-grains so to say without husks’) and on the other hand is equivalent to our ‘like’, ‘in the same manner as’ (Maitr. S. 1, 4, 5 γάμ ἰβα γανάμ na duhita ‘who would not milk (derive profit from) the sacrifice like a cow?’); in both examples there is concord in case-forms.

Not rarely the use of vague and undifferentiated terminology, while easily covering mechanistic explications and pseudo-linguistic or actually logical argumentations, prevents scholars from appreciating the merits and the full meaning of the opinions advanced by those philologists who have attempted to deepen their insight into syntactic processes. Thus the traditional explication of Ζ 395 f. Ἀνδρομάχη, θυγάτηρ μεγαλήτερος Ἡετίωνος, / Ἡετίων, δς ἐναυὲν ὑπὸ Πλάκω ὑλήσσει: ‘Ἡετίων seems to be attracted

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22. See e.g. R. Förster, *Quaestiones de attractione enuntiationum relativorum*... Berlin 1868, pp. 44 f.; Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax*, I, p. 55.—For the character of the so-called relative pronoun and relative clauses and other relevant constructions see my article on the Indo-European relative pronoun in *Lingua* 4 (Amsterdam 1954), pp. 1 ff.

23. Lagas, o.c., p. 113.

to the case of the following relative\textsuperscript{25} made most scholars, almost instinctively, not only reject Wackernagel’s suggestion to consider ‘Hētǐōn δός a case of haplography,\textsuperscript{26} but also Havers’ more plausible proposal to regard ‘Hētǐōn as a non-construing nominative, a so-called Nominativ der Ruheelage.\textsuperscript{27} Yet, Wackernagel was right in observing that that part of the utterance which undergoes the so-called \textit{attractio inversa} is rather limited in extent, constituting a small portion of that which in another construction would be the main clause, so that when pronouncing it the speaker has not yet decided on the construction to be adopted. That is to say, the part of the sentence preceding the relative pronoun is uttered without regard to the structure of the latter part.

Wackernagel could have added that the nominal cases ‘substituted’ by the ‘attracted’ form—or rather, the cases which might have been expected if the sentence was formed according to the rules of logical grammar—are, as a rule, the nominative and the accusative,\textsuperscript{28} and that occurrences of this so-called \textit{attractio inversa} are practically absent when the ‘relative clause’ contains an unimportant or accidental communication. Moreover the antecedent and the ‘relative clause’ constitute, in verses, often a metrical unit\textsuperscript{29}—cf. Ξ 371 / ὑσπίδες δόσαι ἐρίσται ... / ἐσσόμενοι, and prose texts such as Xen., Hell. 1, 4, 2 ... Λακεδαίμονι πάντων ὅπις δέονται πεπράγοτες εἶλεν ‘(that) the L. had obtained everything they wanted’ must not doubt be read without a pause between the ‘antecedent’ and the ‘relative pronoun’. The conclusion must be that in sentences such as Ξ 371; Ξ 75 νής ἔσαι πρότατε εἰρύται ἀγχι θαλάσσης / ἐλκωμεν ...; Verg., Aen. 1, 573 urbem quam statuo vestra est ‘antecedent’ and ‘relative clause’ are so closely connected as to form a single whole. Word groups such as νῆς ... θαλάσσης and urbem quam statuo really constitute one uninterrupted ‘motoric’ whole (no commas!); the ‘antecedent’ is, in point of fact, not ‘attracted’ by the relative, but dependent on the verb of the ‘relative clause’ of which it forms part. From the descriptive point of view this construction is an indication of this intimate connection, which genetically speaking is the main factor conditioning it. The ‘epanalepsis’ in Z 396 and the pause rightly assumed by many editors after ‘Hētǐōn stamp this verse as a special


\textsuperscript{26} Wackernagel, \textit{Verlesungen über Syntax}, I, p. 56.


\textsuperscript{29} Compare, in a German popular song, \textit{den liebsten Buhlen den ich han, der iegt beim Wirt im Keller}.

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case, which in my opinion was best explained by Havers as ‘Nominativ der Ruhelage in der Apposition’. The nominative states, repeats or resumes the mere nominal idea, forming at the same time a starting-point of an amplification. For the ‘moratory’ function of epanalepsis one might compare a 50 f. νήσος ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ, δόθε τ᾽ ὅμοιον ἔστι θαλάςσης, / νήσος δενδρή-
εσσα, θεὰ δ᾽ ἐν δόματα ναίει (notice the nominative!) where some editors wrongly placed a point after θαλάςσης and supposed δέσιν to be understood after νήσος δενδρήσσα. For a nominative placed in a position of relief before the utterance to which it logically belongs (‘Heraus-
stellung’) see e.g. Soph., O.R. 1524 ὁ πάτρας Θῆβης ἐνοικηλ, λεύσσετ’, Οἰδίπος οδη, / ὃς . . . / ὃς . . . / εἰς ὅσον κλόδονα δεινης συμφορας ἐλάμβησεν. The use of the nominative, which is ‘the noun itself’ (πτώς ὁνομαστική), expressing the mere nominal idea, is not limited to its functions as subject or predicate in a limited group of standard sentences; it is indeed also used in ‘independent’, ‘isolated’ or ‘absolute’ positions, e.g. in quotations of names, in enumerations, in indications of a thema, in ‘Heraus-
stellung’, etc.

There has been some difference of opinion with regard to constructions such as E 253 οὐ γάρ μοι γενναίον ἄλλοιςάζοντι μάχεσθαι ‘not in my blood is it to fight a skulking fight’ (Murray). Whereas Kühner-Gerth, who like Stahl held this mode of expression to be due to attraction, describe the concurrent construction with the accusative (Xen., ΚΥΡ. 2, 1, 15 Εἴς ἐσεῖν ἠμὲν . . . λαβόντας δῆπλα εἰς κινδύνον ἐμβάλλειν) as a case of ‘Vernach-
lässigung der Attraktion’ (sic!), commentators were often inclined to consider the accusative as normal and Lagas speaks of an ‘assimilated dative’, Brugman rightly recalled the occurrence of similar constructions in the related languages (Latin, Slavonic, Lithuanian): Caesar, B.G. 5, 41, 6 licere illis incolibus discedere. One should moreover remember, on the one hand, that in ancient times adjectives were in frequent use not only as predicates and appositions, but also to qualify verbal predicates (A. nocturnus venit, Skt. D. vivasa tirodadhe ‘D. disappeared against her will’),
and on the other, that—the infinitive proper being a comparatively recent phenomenon—the accusative constructions with the infinitive do not date back to an early period. The thesis seems to be tenable that sentences such as E 253 originated, against the background of the frequent constructions with an adjective—or a predicative substantive: cf. Xen., An. 7, 1, 21 νῦν τοι ἔστιν . . . ἀνδρὶ γενέσθαι—, in amplifications consisting of a nominal form which in the course of time assumed the character of an infinitive\(^{38}\) and which were qualified by another noun following, in harmony with its 'appositional' character, the general rules of concord. Originally the sense of a sentence of the type E 253 may have been: (lit.) 'it is not in me as an escaping one to fight'.

The double nominative of the type οἶδα θνητός ἄν—e.g. Thuc. 7, 47, 1 ἔστων ὡς καταρθοῦντες . . . se rem non prospere gerere'—is, as appears from similar constructions in Vedic and Avestan,\(^{39}\) ancient: Ved., ChāndU. 5, 3, 4 kim arusīśa vocāthāh 'why did you say that you had been instructed?' We may consider this construction—cf. also cases such as Hdt. 4, 137 λέγωντος ὡς . . . σὺνταύτῳ . . . οἷς τε ἔστθαι ἄρχειν, οὐτοὶ ἢλλον οὐδέναν and Dem. 21, 203 ἐμὲ ὑστεροί' ἕμιν ἔσοιτεν, ἡμές δὲ νεμεῖσθαι—to have originated in 'I know: “being mortal” ' which so to say occupies a middle position between the direct quotation or discourse 'I know: "I am mortal" ' \(^{40}\) which has become usual in written Sanskrit, and constructions with accusativus cum infinitivo or conjunctions and subordinate clauses (or indirect discourse) which came to prevail in other languages. There is no space here to dwell on particular cases\(^{41}\) which show interesting variations in construction.

I would also avoid the term attraction in the numerous cases of the type Thuc. 1, 8, 2 οἱ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν νησίων κακοῦργοι ἀνέστησαν ὡς' αὐτοῦ: when people (etc.) who are in a place are said to depart (etc.) from it the prepositions ἄπο and ἐξ may occur instead of ἐν.\(^{42}\) The term prolepsis\(^{43}\) is no doubt somewhat better because this construction may be explained from the tendency to omit, in speaking or writing, links which are from the logical point of view necessary; the group ἐξ αὐτῶν before ἀνέστησαν is not expressed and instead of the preposition ἐν the author writes ἐξ: the so-called anticipatory phantasy,\(^{44}\) which is especially manifest in vivid or

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41. Enumerated by Kühner-Gerth, o.c., II, pp. 49 f.
42. Kühner-Gerth, o.c., I, p. 546.
44. I refer to W. Havers, *Handbuch der erklärenden Syntax*, Heidelberg 1931, pp. 41 ff.; see also pp. 152 f.
sketchy narratives and may of course to a certain extent mechanize.

Neither a structure such as Eur., I.A. 682 ὃς ἀχθος ἢ μὴν ἔγενεθ' ή Φρογὸν πόλις / Ἐλένη τε—explained by Lagas as an instance of perseveration (under the influence of the singular ἀχθος the verb is in the singular) or of anticipation (the ‘attraction’ being exerted by πόλις)—nor sentences of the type Hdt. 1, 93 ἢ μὲν δὴ περίῳδος ... εἰςι στάδιον ἐξ should in my opinion be dealt with under the heading attraction. The former is an instance of the widespread tendency to avoid long syntactic ‘spans’ or composite or complicated elements within the framework of a normal type of sentence. If one of the elements of a sentence (subject, predicate, object, adjectival qualification etc.) is twofold, one of its parts is very often placed at the end of the sentence, which without this amplification would be complete in itself: Cato, R.R. 6, 1 ubi ager crassus erit aut nebulosior; T 310 δοτὼ δ' Ἀπειδά κεντν καὶ δίος Ὠδισσεός. In the other example the verb agrees with the nominal predicate which is close by it instead of agreeing with the subject. This construction is normal in Latin and not foreign to Sanskrit and other languages: cf. in German, Schiller, Maria Stuart 1, 7 das sind meine Richter, and in Dutch, dat zijn mijn rechters. Delbrück's qualification ‘Entgleisung’ shows the influence of logical syntax. The frequency of the constructions may have considerably increased through the co-existence of ‘inverted’ sentences: das Salz der Erde seid ihr. Compare also the occasional cases of perseveration of the genus of the attribute: Cic., Div. 2, 90 non omnis error (masc.) stultitia dicenda est and sentences such as Cic., Pomp. 11 Corinthum (fem.) patres vestri, totius Graeciae lumen, extinctum esse voluerunt.

There is no occasion to repeat the remarks made apropos of the so-called modal attraction, real cases of which—e.g. Plaut., M.G. 149 faciemus ut quod viderit (instead of vidit) ne viderit—are in my opinion much more infrequent than many scholars have been inclined to believe. Many instances quoted in this connection are rather to be regarded as an optative or subjunctive in their own right. Thus in Ξ 107 νὸν δ' ἐφ' ὃς τῆς δέ γ' ἀμαμωμοῦ μὴν ἐνίσποι, the first among the many examples which Kühner-Gerth

45. Lagas, o.c., p. 193.
47. See Speyer, Sanskrit Syntax, Leyden 1886, p. 18.
48. See also O. Erdmann, Grundzüge der deutschen Syntax, II, Stuttgart 1898, pp. 49 f.
49. Delbrück, o.c., III, p. 239.
believed to be quotable, the second verb is a potential optative: 'if there were such a man, he could speak'.

Ernout and Thomas should—after their interpretation of the curious Latin phrases *ante diem tertium Kal. Ianuarias* (instead of *die terto ante Kal. Ian.*), *post diem tertium quam* etc.: mechanical anticipation, facilitated by phrases such as *paucos ante annos* 'a few years before', in which *ante* is an adverb—have avoided the term attraction.—The instances of the early Latin expressions Cato, *Agr. 154 uti (labrum) transferri possiturs*, and (also in classical literature) *coepus est* instead of *coepit* etc. should be described as 'Übercharakterisierung' or abundance in connection with a category (the passive) which in popular usage was rather rare.—The use of past participles in connection with *opportuit*—*Ter., Ad. 214 adulescenti morem gestum opportuit*—is like Plaut., *Cist. 299 te ... volo montium*; Lucr. 3, 68 *effugisse voluut* determined by the tendency to refer to processes as having come about or as being already accomplished ('Fait-accompel Darstellung').

52. For perseveration of tense forms—e.g. Plaut., *M.G. 651 plus dabo quam praedicabo ex me venustatis tibi*—see e.g. W. Kroll, *Die wissenschaftliche Syntax im Lateinischen Unterricht*, Berlin 1925, pp. 65 ff.; E. Fraenkel, in *Indog. Forsch.* 41 (1923), *Anz.*, p. 20. As to Cic., *Cat. 3, 11 quanta conscientiae vis esset* (one might expect *sit* ostendit compare in English *what did you say your name was?* and γ 292.

55. Ernout-Thomas, o.c., p. 208.
58. Ernout-Thomas, o.c., p. 282.
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