Herman Christiaan Roeters van Lennep (1820-1879) and the auction of his collection

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Herman Christiaan Roeters van Lennep (1820-1879) en de veiling van zijn collectie

Samenvatting. H.C. Roeters van Lennep was een van de bekendere Nederlandse schelpenverzamelaars in het midden van de 19e eeuw, over wie hier aanvullende biografische informatie wordt gepresenteerd. Zijn verzameling werd in 1876 geveild, maar daar is tot nu toe slechts beperkt over gepubliceerd. De totstandkoming van de veiling wordt gereconstrueerd aan de hand van correspondentie met H. Crosse. Nieuwe informatie geeft inzicht wie kopers waren tijdens de veiling, welke prijzen werden gerealiseerd en waar een deel van het materiaal is terechtgekomen. Er blijkt een tweede veiling te zijn geweest in 1879 waar mogelijk een groot deel van het restant van de eerste veiling is verkocht.

Summary. H.C. Roeters van Lennep was one of the most famous Dutch shell collectors during the mid-19th century, for whom we here present new and additional biographical information. His collection was auctioned in 1876, but so far only a limited amount of information has been published on this topic. The details of the auction are reconstructed on the basis of his correspondence with H. Crosse. Such new information provides an insight into who buyers were during the auction, which prices were realised, and where parts of the material ended up. There appears to have been a second auction in 1879 where possibly a large part of the remainder of the first auction was sold.



Fig. 1. Portrait of H.C. Roeters van Lennep, 1879 (courtesy of G.W. Roeters van Lennep).

Introduction

Herman Christiaan Roeters van Lennep (fig. 1) was born on 20 December 1820 in Amsterdam. He was the eighth child of Jacob Roeters van Lennep (1783-1861) and Johanna Hermina Coster (1790-1828). Married in 1845 to Cornelia Baukje Maria Beyerinck (1822-1865); re-married 1868 to his Swiss housekeeper Zélie Uranie Laura Jaccard (1843-1921). From his first marriage five children were born, from the second one two children. Roeters van Lennep loved the 'good life' and music, and he played the piano sometimes late into the night. He was a deacon in the Baptist Church from 1842-1852. Roeters van Lennep belonged to the well-known Amsterdam commercial house Van Lennep & Co., where he was active until 1867. In 1864 he was one of the founders of the Amsterdamsche Sodafabriek [Amsterdam Soda Factory], at that time a booming business, but a short-lived one due to increasing competition from larger-scale English producers who dumped their products on European markets. The factory closed in 1871 (Lintsen, 1993: 202-203). When his father died in 1861, he acquired the estate 'De Parkeler' in Twello, near Deventer, which was then 40 ha (fig. 2). In 1862 he moved from Amsterdam to Twello, where he lived until his death on 15 August 1879. He had a large collection of flowers in several greenhouses. Due to bad management, the estate was considerably reduced in size, and he lost his fortune due to speculation shortly before his death.

Together with Abraham Oltmans (1811-1873) and Frans van Heukelom (1812-1872), both living in Amsterdam, and Florentine Jacobine Martina Retaan Macaré-Ontijd (1812-1887) from Utrecht, Roeters van Lennep was one of the most well-known Dutch shell collectors during the mid-19th century. Dance (1966: 64) refers to him as "a famous collector of Amsterdam, [who] had the specimen of Angaria sphaerula Kiener, which was figured in the Thesaurus, pl. 59, figs 1 and 2"; this specimen originated from the cabinet of Albert Seba (1665-1736). However, it remains unknown how this specimen came to the Roeters van Lennep collection and what its final fate was (Van Benthem Jutting, 1939: 169).

The collection

From his childhood Roeters van Lennep had been interested in shells and in 1841 he became a member of the Koninklijk Zoölogisch Genootschap 'Natura Artis Magistra' [Royal Zoological Society 'Artis']. At the Artis Society he regularly met with Oltmans and Van Heukelom to discuss shells, to arrange exchanges, and they also made joint purchases from foreign dealers (Van Benthem Jutting, 1939; Van der Bijl & Moolenbeek, 1992). Through time he built up an important collection of both marine and terrestrial species.

In 1866 Roeters van Lennep subscribed to the Journal de conchyliologie; he remained a subscriber until the end of 1878. His first letter to Crosse (then editor of the Journal) that is preserved dates from 18 December 1872. He mentions having received a letter from G.B. Sowerby III who asked him to communicate to Crosse that his father, in the Conchologica Iconica, will describe Magilus microcephalus as a new species. Roeters van Lennep continued: "En attendant je suis bien curieux d'entendre votre opinion de cette coquille, aussi si vouz avez trouvé des espèces nouvelles parmi les autres" [In the meantime I am very curious to hear your opinion on this shell, also if you have found new species among the others]. Finally he mentions not to have yet seen in the Journal de conchyliologie a death notice for Van Heukelom, who donated his library and collection to Artis. Crosse redressed his omission shortly afterwards (Crosse & Fischer, 1873). The second letter is from 17 March 1874 in which Roeters van Lennep mentioned he had seen the figures of Meroe roetsersi and Murex lienardi in a recent paper by Crosse (Crosse, 1874b: pl. 3 fig. 7 respectively Crosse, 1874a: pl. 3 fig. 4); he further referred to a series of shells which a friend who visited Paris in September 1873 had delivered to Crosse. "J'espère que vous les aurez reçu, pourvu que cela me fera plaisir de connaitre votre opinion si il y a quelque espèce nouvelle entre celles là" [I hope you have received them, I will be pleased to know your opinion on if there is some new species between those there]. On 27 November 1875 he wrote again to Crosse that his friend P. Smidt van Gelder was in Paris, and if Crosse could be so kind to send the shells (in total 31 species) to his hotel. Evidently Crosse had identified the specimens for Roeters van Lennep.

Van Benthem Jutting (1939) previously mentioned a manuscript catalogue in the Library of the Artis Society, which was presented by the heirs of Roeters van Lennep. This is a voluminous, handwritten book of 376 numbered pages, plus a number of (partly loose-leaf) unnumbered pages, in which Roeters van Lennep had recorded each species in his collection (fig. 3). The majority are marine species, usually with locality data. The continental species are, to the contrary, usually recorded without locality data. According to a letter pasted in the front, the book was presented to G.F. Westerman, director of Artis 1849-1890, on 15 January 1885 by Gerrit Jan Adriaan Roeters van Lennep (1850-1911).

The auction catalogue

On 26th January 1876 Roeters van Lennep wrote again to Crosse "J'ai l'intention de vendre mon Cabinet précieux de conchyliologie contenant 9000 espèces pour la plupart de premier ordre et plusieurs des plus rares et unique. Ce sera environ le 15 du moi de Mai prochain. La vente aura lieu à Twello près Deventer. Le catalogue seras pret avant le 1 Avril et Mr Sowerby de Londres a bien voulu se charger de la distribuer a toutes ses adresses. Aussi vous m'obligerez de vouloire m'assister et d'insérer un petit article dans le Journal, pour attirer l'attention des amateurs sur



Fig. 2. Photograph of the "De Parkeler" house, before 1901 (courtesy of G.W. Roeters van Lennep).

cette occasion unique de completer leur Collections" [I intend to sell my precious shell cabinet containing 9000 species mostly of the highest order and several of the rarest and unique. It will be around the 15th of this May. The sale will take place in Twello near Deventer. The catalog will be ready before the 1st of April, and Mr. Sowerby of London has been good enough to distribute it to all his addresses. Also you will oblige me to assist me and insert a small article in the Journal, to attract the attention of the amateurs on this unique opportunity to complete their collections]. Crosse placed a brief announcement of the auction in the Nouvelles (Crosse, 1876a: 216), and on the back cover of the second issue (fig. 4), which was published on 19 May 1876 (Fischer-Piette, 1937).



Fig. 3. Page from the manuscript catalogue in H.C. Roeters van Lennep's handwriting (Library Artis Society; original 26.1 x 20.8 cm).



Fig. 4. Announcement of the auction in Journal de conchyliologie 24 (2).

The auction catalogue itself was made up by G.B. Sowerby and had 78 pages listing 1675 lots, each containing one or more species (Sowerby, 1876). As the catalogue is not listed in the bibliography of the Sowerby's (Petit, 2009), doubt remains whether it was done by Sowerby II (Dance, 1966) or Sowerby III (Coan & Kabat, 2018). In the library of Artis we found two copies of the catalogue, both interleaved but only one with annotations of the purchases by Artis (see below). There were several typos in the names of species, e.g. Magilus macrophalus was a misprint for microphalus (Lot 222), Fusus conei a misprint for couei (Lot 1653). wrote "The auction of the Roeters van Lennep cabinet was attended by the then curator of Artis, Jonkheer W.N.M. van de Blocquery. In an interleaved copy of the catalogue (now in the Library of the Society) he made annotations as to which specimens he purchased for Artis and at what prices. There were a few rare or unique species among them: Meroe roetersiana Crosse, Fusus couei Petit, Murex lienardi Crosse. In general the prices fetched were far from bad. Thus I quote Conus cervus f. 240.- [fig. 5], Conus cedonulli f. 132., Rostellaria powisi f. 100.-(note 1). About the destiny of the famous Lucina voorhoevi [which Roeters van Lennep bought at the sale of the Voorhoeve collection] I have no further information". Tomlin (1942) said about the Van Lennep sale "The catalogue contained 1,675 lots, and there were in addition two supplements [not clear, however, to which supplements he referred]. The collection was said to consist of about 9,000 species, and the following items are of special interest: holotypes of Murex lienardi Crosse, Meroë roetersiana Crosse, Lucina voorhovi [sic] Deshayes, Magilus microcephalus Sowerby, Cyrena eximia Dunker, Helix lennepiana Pfr., Fusus conei [sic] Petit and Delphinula arion Meuschen (i.e. sphaerula Kiener)". Dance (1966: 193) mentioned "the catalogue



Fig. 5. Conus cervus Lamarck, 1822, LMD.LOEB-102 with 507a, one of the most expensive shells during the 1876 auction (photo S. Curth).

The auction, the buyers, and the destiny of some of the shells During the preparation of the auction, the starting date of which was fixed on 18 July 1876, Roeters van Lennep corresponded with Crosse several times. On 28 May he thanked him for the announcement in the Journal, and gave him practical information on travelling ("On n'a nullement besoin de passaport en Hollande" [One does not need a passport in Holland]), possible hotels, and train times for his arrival in Deventer. In a second letter dated 19 June he expressed the hope Crosse had meanwhile received his previous letter, and also the catalogue directly from Sowerby.

A few publications do mention the auction, the buyers and the destiny of some of the shells. Van Benthem Jutting (1939: 169)

lists many rare and valuable shells, including Conus cervus Lamarck, C. moluccensis Küster and C. thomae Gmelin. (...) Lennep's proudest possession was the holotype of Angaria arion Meuschen (= A. spaerula Kiener) (Lot 621 of the sale, advertised in the catalogue as 'Delphinula arion. The specimen figured in Seba, Tom. 3, pl. 59, described Journal de Conch, 1870, page 380, one of the valuable shells of this collection, there is probably only one other known')".

Only in Van Benthem Jutting (1939) do we find some information about who has bought part of the material: "Among the other [referring to the Artis curator] purchasers I found the names of Dr. IJ. Keyzer and Mr. M.M. Schepman". We have not found these named in the copy annotated by Van de Blocquery,



Fig. 6. Page of the 1876 auction catalogue, with annotations by Van de Blocquery (Library Artis Society).

but in the Leiden collection some specimens can indeed be found ex Schepman ex Roeters van Lennep; however, we found the additional name of "den Heer Arnold" [Mr. Arnold], for whom we have been unable to find more data. From the annotated copy it is clear that buyers also traded with each other during the auction (fig. 6). In total, Van de Blocquery bought according to his own annotations 46 lots for Artis amounting in total f. 400.– (table 1). Van Bentem Jutting (1939: 213-214) has listed more annotated prices (also for some of the lots which according to Van de Blocquery were not bought for Artis), but

omitted some others.

A letter from Roeters van Lennep to Crosse, sent shortly after the auction, gives more details about the event. He wrote on 25 July "La vente de mon Musée à été magnifique. Les Messieurs amateurs Français, Anglais, Allemands et Hollandais se sont disputés des choses rares et uniques, comme vous verrez du note que vous avez envoyé et dont je vous ai indiqué le montant pour chacque lot (...) Je vous ai encore indiqué de quelques lots les prix qu'on payé" [The sale of my museum was magnificent. French, English, German and Dutch amateur gentlemen have been fighting for rare and unique things, as you will see from the note you sent on which I have indicated the amount for each lot (...) I have also indicated for you a few more of the prices that were paid]. Attached to the letter was a handwritten list (fig. 7), which not only reveals in which lots Crosse was interested and how much he was willing to pay, but also the names of several other buyers and the prices that were paid; this latter information was added by Roeters van Lennep. The list adds five additional lots for "Mus. Amsterdam" which are not mentioned in the annotated copy of Van de Blocquery. Buyers additional to the ones mentioned before were Mrs. De Burgh (†1881), Abbé Dominique Dupuy (1812-1885), Carl Heinrich Wilhelm Theodor Löbbeke (1821-1901), Philipp Arnoldus van Rees (1817-1902), and D. Tobias; of course, G.B. Sowerby who had made the catalogue, was also present and may have bought a substantial

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Fig. 7. List (recto and verso) of selected lots by Crosse from the auction catalogue, with handwriting of H. Crosse and H.C. Roeters van Lennep, indicating prices and buyers (Backhuys archive; original 21 x 13.2 cm).



Fig. 8. Title page of the 1879 auction catalogue (Library Artis Society; original 22.2 x 13.5 cm).

part of the most interesting species. As this letter from Roeters van Lennep reveals, Crosse was not present but the notary bought several lots on his behalf.

Of all the species mentioned in the list, we have tried to check their provenance (table 2). According to Dance (1966) the De Burgh collection went to the London museum, and the Dupuy collection to the Toulouse museum. Remarkably, a substantial part has been dispersed to unknown buyers (mainly through Sowerby) or could not be found in the depository where they were supposed to be.

The aftermath

As a letter from Roeters van Lennep to Crosse of 5 September 1876 shows, the latter was curious to know the proceeds of the auction. "Vous me demandez le prix total de la vente pour dire quelques mots aux 'Nouvelles' de votre prochain numéro du JdC. Il faut s'avoir que la moitié a seulement été vendu, ainsi c'est pour Fr 23000.– et j'ai en voyage pour ce moment pour Fr 12000.– pourtant il me reste encore une grande quantité de coquilles. Des 1675 No du catalogue, 900 No ont été vendu et 775 No retenus. En six semaines, environs le 15 Oct. je sauras ce qu'il me reste en coquilles" [You asked me the total price of the sale in order to say a few words in the 'News' of your next issue of the Journal. You have to know that only half has been sold, so it is for Fr 23000.- and I am expecting at this moment another Fr 12000.-, yet I still have a lot of shells. Of the 1675 catalog numbers, 900 numbers were sold and 775 were retained. In six weeks, around the 15th of October, I will know what shells are left]. In the last issue of the 1876 volume of the Journal, Crosse mentioned a number of species and the price they had fetched during the auction (Crosse, 1876b: 397).

A second auction

In the Library of the Artis Society we found a hitherto unknown catalogue of a second auction of shells from the Roeters van Lennep collection, an eight page leaflet (fig. 8). This auction was held on 13 January 1879 in Amsterdam. The catalogue, this time in Dutch, contained two series of lots: a first series of 187 lots of marine shells, among them two curiosities (note 2); a second series of 100 lots with shells from Mauritius and Madagascar, containing both marine and terrestrial species. This second auction was likely based on the remainder of the first one, but we have no further documentation to prove this. Neither we know who were present and who bought material.

Conclusion

Dance (1966: 193) remarked "the [Twello] sale was a success, although the relatively low prices given for type specimens indicate that customers were still much less impressed by a shell's extrinsic scientific value than by its intrinsic beauty". However, the quotes above from Roeters van Lennep seem to show his initial satisfaction (25th July), but when urged to make up the balance his conclusion on the 5th of September was less joyful. If we assume that at least part of the material was sold during the second auction, we can safely guess that most of collection was dispersed to mostly unknown buyers. Nonetheless, the provenance of some of the more precious shells has been elucidated, while other remnants of the Roeters van Lennep collection can still be found in several museums (note 3).

Acknowledgements

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Table 1. Lots from the printed auction catalogue of 1876, bought for Natura Artis Magistra, with prices paid as annotated by Van de Blocquery. Lots with numbers in bold were indicated as type specimens in the catalogue. Underlined names are specimens located in the collection (now in Leiden). Grey coloured lots have not been indicated by Van de Blocquery but were mentioned by Roeters van Lennep in his data for Crosse (cf. Table 2).

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330 Conu 338 Conu 393 Conu 393 Conu 394 Conu 395 Conu 418 Conu 452 Rostu 453 Rostu 463 Cypr 564 Nerri 625 Volui 741 Schiz	nus promethus, C. nemocanus, C. laevis, C. tesselatus nus undatus, C. coffea <u>nus cuneatus</u> nus altispirata nus julii nus stillatus, C. straturatas, C. subulatus, C. croceus tellaria powisii	6 18 11 9 18 18	983 1027 1038 1041 1086	Helix batanica Bulimus castaneus and others Perideris auripigmentum and others Bulimus dennisoni Achatina indotata, A. fulva, A. petersi	7 8 11 11
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 453 Rosta 463 Cypr 564 Nerir 621 Delp 665 Volut 741 Schiz 	1	46		Spiraxis cumingiana, Columna flammea	4
 463 Cypr 564 Nerin 621 Delp 665 Volut 741 Schiz 	tellaria melanostoma	-10	1108	Cyclotus incomptus and others	5.50
564 Nerin 621 Delp 665 Volut 741 Schiz		10	1114	Hybocistis mouhoti, H. gravida	6
621 Delp665 Volut741 Schiz	vraea adamsoni	8	1116	Cyclostoma occlusum and others	10
665 Volut 741 Schiz	ita 27 species	11	1123	Cyclostoma formosium, C. campanulatum	22
741 Schiz	phinula arion	115	1191	Pecten pesanatis, P. lividus	3
	uta sclateri	35	1209	Pecten magellanicus	3
801 Stylif	izochiton incisus	4	1211	Pecten subnodosus	4.50
	ifer corallinus, Scalenostoma carinatum 2	8	1230	Lima squamosa and others	3
804 Eulin	ma 8 species, Styliferina 2 species	4.50	1245	Spondylus americanus	7
881 Helix	ix audebardi, H. undulata, H. luguillensis, H. atrata	5.50	1300	Mactra rugifera and others	1.50
889 Helix	ix terrieziana and others	4	1305	Mactra elegans	14
895 Helix	ix idahoensis and others	4.50	1327	Tellina pulcherrima	4.50
924 Helix	ix roberti (via Sowerby)	3	1341	Psammobia maxima and others	3.50
937 Helix	ix migratoria and others	8	1344	Elizia orbiculata, Sanguinolaria species	4
941 Helix	ix rosarium and others	5	1373	Meroe roetersiana	14
943 Helix	ix carolus (via Sowerby)	6	1653	Fusus couei	10
953 Helix		16	1668	Murex lienardi	5
954 Helix	ix norrisi, H. chrysocheila	14			

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Notes

1. One guilder in 1876 equals currently ~ \in 10.40 (IISG, 2018). Note that some of the prices given by Van Benthem Jutting in her 1939 paper differ from those mentioned in this paper.

2. Advertised as "Curiositeiten. 1 gesneden Nautilus met een apengezicht / 1 Haliotus met een gezicht van een oud man, tevens kan men er een hondekop uit zien" [Curiosities. 1 cut Nautilus (shell) with the face of an ape / 1 Haliotus with an old man's face which can also be seen as a dog's head].

3. The Naturalis Bioportal lists 41 lots which are associated with the Roeters van Lennep collection, either directly or indirectly via the Schepman collection. This number is probably not limitative as the collection cannot be checked at the moment due to renovation activities. A list of material, c. 1800 lots, present in the Löbbeke Museum and associated with the Roeters van Lennep collection is available at DOI: 10.6084/m9.figshare.7376084.

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Table 2. Destiny of several shells from the Roeters van Lennep collection. Lot numbers refer to the printed auction catalogue of 1876; species nameis the name used in that catalogue. Abbreviations of depostories: LMD, Aquazoo Löbbeke Museum, Düsseldorf, Germany; NHM, Natural HistoryMuseum, London, U.K.; ZMA, Naturalis Biodiversity Center, Leiden, the Netherlands (former collection of Zoologisch Museum Amsterdam). 1French Franc ≈ 0.46 Guilder (1876).

Lot	Species	Buyer	Price (Frs)	Depository	Notes
13	Clea nigricans	Sowerby	25	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
58	Buccinopsis dalei		24	?	
72	Ranella perca		66	?	
222	Magilus macrocephalus	Löbbeke	36 + 40		Not found
223	Mitra belcheri		200	LMD.LOEB-107401-0	Marked as 'missing'
226	Mitra moerchi	Sowerby	75	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
245	Mitra dennisoni	Mus. Amsterdam	24		Not found
248	Mitra microstoma		30		
287	Conus cedonulli	Unknown buyer	260	?	
309	Conus thomae	Sowerby	180	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
357	Conus cervus	Löbbeke	220	LMD.LOEB-102507a	
452	Rostellaria powisii	Mus. Amsterdam	100		Not found
466	Cypraea bicallosa	Sowerby	100	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
621	Delphinula arion	Mus. Amsterdam	250		Not found
665	Voluta sclateri	-	80		Not found
668	Voluta junoniae	Löbbeke	260	LMD.LOEB-114423a	Marked as 'missing'
670	Voluta lyraeformis	Dupuy	286		Not located
683	Voluta hamillei		60		
694	Voluta tissotiana	Sowerby	35	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
832	37 Clausilia species	Crosse	24	?	After his death in 1898 collection auctioned
851	Amastra kauaiensis	Dupuy	15		Not located
859	Helix petitiana	Sowerby	34	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
	Helix apollo			?	
878	Helix gloriosa	Crosse	16	?	After his death in 1898 collection auctioned
	Helix magnifica			?	
901	Helix linnaeana	Löbbeke	70		Not found
963	Helix lituus	Mus. Amsterdam	24	ZMA.MOLL.397540	Current name Papuina lituus Lesson, 1831
967	Helix grata		27	ZINAINOLLISTISHO	Not found
	Helix clairvilliae		26		
/0/	Helix nobilis	_	20		
	Helix distincta	-			_
982	Helix nasuta	Löbbeke	24		Not found
986	Helix rumphii		10		
/00	Helix retrorsa	-	10		_
992	Helix lennepiana	_	29		
1123	Cyclostoma formosium	Mus. Amsterdam	48		Not found
1123	Cyclostoma campanulatum		40		
1166	Lucina voorhoevii	Mrs De Burgh	94		Holotype of <i>Retrolucina voorhoevei</i> (Deshayes, 1857);
1226	Hinnites giganteus	van Rees	46	?	Collection sold and dispersed in 1900
1220	Carinara vitrea	Sowerby	60	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
1230		-	180	! 	Not located
1241	Spondylus regius	Dupuy Löbbeke	180	LMD.LOEB-127618a	
	Panopea middendorfi				Current name Panomya norvegica (Spengler, 1793)
1295	Panopea spengleri	Sowerby	16 70	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer
1309	Mactra triangularis	Tobias			Collection sold and dispersed in 1885
1311	Anatinella sibbaldii	Sowerby	66	?	Dispersed to unknown buyer After his death in 1898 collection auctioned
1363	Clavagella philippianum	Crosse	10		
4070	Clavagella balanorum			?	
1373	Meroe roetersiana	Mus. Amsterdam	30	ZMA.MOLL.135418	Holotype; current name <i>Sunetta donacina</i> Gmelin,
1652	Fusus pagodus	Mrs De Burgh	132		Not found
1653	Fusus couei	Mus. Amsterdam	22		Not found

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