

## British Prisoners in the Lisbon Inquisition

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Kindly transcribed from the original Report by the Society's Librarian, Dani Monteiro, maintaining the original grammar of the article.

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To examine the records of the Inquisition in search either of sensation or of food for propaganda is equally unprofitable. Almost if not all the worst features of the system can be studied at first hand by anyone who chooses to make himself a nuisance in at least three European countries today. It may even be added that though the similarities are great, in some respects, the Holy Office does not suffer by comparison.

“Though I belong to a race against which its persecutions were most strenuously directed”, writes Professor Roth, “I could not fail to be impressed deeply by the method, and indeed conscientiousness, of the Inquisitorial procedure”.<sup>1</sup>

Hearsay evidence was admitted to an unlimited extent, but every trivial point was the subject of examination and cross questioning till all parties must have reached the point of exhaustion apt to assail the reader of to-day. But it is just this meticulousness that makes the cases a mine of information on every aspect of human life and social questions which no one who is attempting to dig up the Past can afford to neglect.

Although the exploration of the Lisbon records has been no more than begun, information has already come to light on the Lisbon Factory, the British religious foundations, much about commerce, more about family history, and perhaps most of all about the manner in which the Treaties between England and Portugal reacted on the subjects of both States. Finally, lest any think this too dull to be the province of any but the professional historian, there steps forth at every turn the life-sized image of some man or woman in all their weakness and sometimes - strength.

A calendar of all the British cases in the Inquisition records of Lisbon, Coimbra, and Evora is in course of preparation, and until it is completed, no accurate figures are possible. The index is primitive and untrustworthy, and the only secure method is to examine every case with a name which even faintly suggests British origin, a slow and, at times, exasperating task.

The three most important so far discovered are too long for more than a brief reference. In 1550, George Buchanan, then a professor at Coimbra, was called to Lisbon to defend himself against a charge of heresy. His trial has been exhaustively studied by Senhor Guilherme Henriques. His translation and notes (now out of print) may be seen by any Member or Associate of the Branch. In the course of the case, such men as Damião de Goes appear; and it gives a picture of contemporary university life.

Another case which created a great stir at the time was that of the Freemason, John Coustos (1746), a naturalized English diamond cutter of Swiss birth. There are no fewer than fourteen pamphlets on the subject of his trial in British Museum, and his own account of his imprisonment is

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<sup>1</sup> Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Vol. XVIII, 4th series.

the best if not most unbiased description of the life of the prisoners. Before their release the prisoners were required to take an oath that they would reveal nothing that had happened, or come to their knowledge, during their imprisonment, but once safely landed in England, Coustos felt himself absolved from this undertaking. In 1746, Hanoverian England was dithering with fright at the advance of Prince Charles Edward to Derby, and Coustos' sufferings were eagerly seized upon as excellent fuel for the ghosts of Smithfield fires. As is usual, no rumour was too wild to serve, and a cry was raised that the restoration of a Catholic Stuart would inevitably bring the Inquisition in its wake; if folks didn't know what that meant - ask John Coustos!

But though Coustos' story of his experiences is quoted far and wide, the dossier of his trial escaped attention until it was discovered and transcribed by Mr. Walford. Its importance to any student of the earlier half of the 18th Century cannot be exaggerated. Mr. Walford's transcription and translation may be consulted by Members and Associates with his permission.

A third trial of unusual interest is that of a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, Hugh Gurgenev, who came to Portugal as a merchant in 1605. It is one of the cases which supplies the most detailed picture of the life of a foreign trading community in Lisbon during the Spanish Occupation. The present writer made a transcription of it, with notes, which is in the Archives of the Branch.

Apart from these cases, the four following, of which summaries are now given, are chosen to show the great variety of types amongst the accused.

The first is of a man whose name is not disclosed - if indeed it was known. It seems clear that he suffered from a form of insanity prevalent during periods of persecution. The episode also demonstrates the manner in which unknown persons might penetrate into the Royal Chapel without being questioned.<sup>2</sup>

The following is a summary of the case contained in the Miscellanea Manuscripto (the original dossier is not in the files):

'In the year 1550 on the 11th of November, Princess Joanna, mother of the late D. Sebastião, came to Portugal to celebrate her marriage to Prince João, son of João III, and on a Sunday of that year the King and all his Court, with the Princess, was hearing Mass in the Chapel of his Palace, being the Church of St. Thomas of Ribeira, and the Chaplain saying Mass. At the elevation of the Host, a man who said he was English, instigated by the Devil and being a heretic, seized the Sacrament from the priest's hands and threw it to the ground, and would have stamped upon it if he had not been seized by some noblemen who wished to kill him on the spot. But the King refused and had him judged, and he was burned alive without renouncing his heresy, and further said he had been expelled from England for being of that Sect.'

The next case has been chosen to show how political considerations sometimes intervened, - that of Margaret Throgmorton. It also introduces Zachary Craddock, the first regular chaplain to be appointed to the British Factory, and Thomas Maynard, one of the outstanding 'characters' among our Consuls. At the time, his sense of his own importance (never small) was increased by the fact that there was no resident Ambassador or Minister. The house of either of the latter then, as now, was extra-territorial, and within its bounds he was free to enjoy his own form of worship even though it might be illegal beyond his gates. This privilege was not extended to Consuls, and Maynard's claim

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<sup>2</sup> Miscellanea Manuscripto, Vol. 1147, p. 354 also Vol. 116a

to it was the cause of recurrent clashes between himself and the Inquisition. It may be remarked that his frequent references in his despatches to his sufferings and persecutions at the hands of the Holy Office relate to this case.

For particulars of Father Gifford and Father Godden the reader is directed to the 'Historical Account of the Lisbon College' by the Very Revd. Canon Croft. I have so far been unable to trace Dom Edward Wynbour. Margaret was probably a member of the well-known Catholic family of Throckmorton, sometimes spelled Throgmorton:

'Throgmorton, Margaret,<sup>3</sup> denounced by Father Peter Gifford, of the College of St. Peter and St. Paul, English, aged 29, on October 1st 1659.

Witness stated that about six months earlier there had come from England a girl, aged 16, to lodge in the house of Dom Manuel de Sousa. She had been sent for by the latter's wife so that she might enter the College of St. Brigit of the English in this city. She was accompanied by another English girl called Margaret Throgmorton, aged 18. Witness does not know her parents, but only that they are well-born. She was to stay sometime in the Sousa's house before entering the Convent. Father Gifford saw her there, and was told by her that she was a Catholic, and had been instructed in the practices of the Faith in the house of the Earl of Brunel (sic). Had several times come to Confession at the College. After some time she quitted the Sousa's house, and went to that of the Consul, Thomas Maynard, but continued to come to the College, and had twice confessed and taken the Sacrament there. In the Presbytery of the said College, Father Robert - or Rupert - Arques (sic) had told the witness that the said girl Margaret, who was in the house of the Consul, was present at prayers there, and that he, the witness, should speak to her about it. Accordingly he did so, and she replied that it was true, and that she had doubts about the Catholic Faith, particularly with regard to the worshipping of images.'

Jan. 4th 1660. Dom Edward Wynbour, native of Lancaster, and in Lisbon on the service of the King of England, gave evidence, Father Thomas Godden acting as interpreter. Dom Edward gave his age as 25. He stated that he had called on the Consul, and had met Margaret Throgmorton there. Father Francis, a Confessor to the Nuns of St. Brigit, had asked him to speak to her. He has always known of her as a Catholic. The preacher, Zachary Craddock, who 20 days ago went to England, was living in the Consulate. When the witness questioned her, Margaret stated that she did not wish to be a Catholic, also that the Consul had told her that she must not go out of doors for fear of being seized by the Inquisition. The witness then asked Margaret if she had been made drunk with wine, or intoxicated by any other passion. She replied that neither in one way nor the other was she in fault.

On Jan. 9th 1660, Manuel de ... (illegible), coadjutor of the parish of St. Catherina de Monte, stated that seven or eight months ago a girl who appeared to be called Maria, of English Birth, aged 17 or 18, at present residing in this city in the house of the Consul of her nation who lives in the Casa Caidos, in the parish of St. Paulo, continued for some time to hear Mass in the Church of Sta. Caterina on Sundays, showing herself very devout. Had told witness that she had come to Lisbon to become a nun. About a month ago the witness had heard from Francisco de Pina, who lives in the Alfama - does not know the street - that he said Maria no longer came to Church because she had become a heretic, and that was why she was not going to become a nun. Also Father Pedro

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<sup>3</sup> Lisbon Inquisition No. 7522, & No. 14192

d'Oliveira, living in the same parish where ... (name illegible), a solicitor for the cases of the English nation, resides, had seen the said Consul who told him that the girl Maria had become a heretic, but gave no reason for her conversion: all of which the witness reported in the presence of Father Francisco Rodrigues Saraiva, coadjutor of the same Church, and to Paulo Esteves, Catalan by birth, a painter, living in the Rua de Ferreiras of the same parish.

On Jan. 10th 1660, Pedro d'Oliveria, who gave assistance in the affairs of the Consul and others of the same nation, living in the 'Terreinho' of the parish of Sta. Caterina da Monte Sinai said - that he knew of no preaching in the city except in the house of Thomas Maynard, who lives in a house which may be either in the parish of S. Paulo or Sta. Caterina, he doesn't know which, where there is preaching every Sunday all the year round. This is held in the room where visitors are received. It is frequented by the English men and women of this city who are not Catholics, and for these there is a preacher who is said to be called Iscarias (Zachary Craddock?) to whom is paid 1.000 cruzados a year by the same English through the Consul. Witness had never been present at the preaching, nor had any other Catholic, but he knows about it from what is publicly said, and by the money which is drawn to pay the preacher. And he knows that in the house of the same Consul there is a girl called Margaret Throgmorton, who looks about 16 years, and who came from England about 8 months ago with the intention of becoming a nun because she was sent for by Dom Manuel de Sousa who lives at S. Roque. The Consul told this to the witness when he asked where Dom Manuel lived, saying he wished to speak to him on the matter of whether the girl did, or did not, wish to go back to England, for he did not wish to send her without informing Dom Manuel. Witness has often seen Margaret at Mass, kneeling very decently with her book in her hand. She usually came in the litter of the Consul, and at the time that the prayer-meeting was being held at his house. Two months ago, however, she had ceased to come to Sta. Caterina. Witness had asked Philip, an Irishman, who acted as book-keeper to Maynard, if he knew the reason for this, and he answered that she had become an apostate. Witness asked if it was the Consul's doing, and Philip said "no" but that of somebody in the house, by which he understood him to mean the preacher. The witness had not come sooner to report this as he had spoken about it to the Inquisitor, Luis Alvares de Rocha, and also to the Visitor who, on behalf of the Archbishop, is a visitor to this Church and is the Bishop of Lagos, and he wished to have more certainty before reporting further. And he also declared that the matter of collecting the salary of the preacher from the heretic English sometimes caused him scruples of which he has spoken to his Confessor, who told him these were needless as his not paying the salary would not prevent there being a preacher.

Francisco de Pina, 12th Jan. 1660 adds little to the foregoing, merely confirming the presence of the girl in the Consul's house.

'William Trussel, an English merchant, Jan. 17th 1660: has a shop in the Arco do Pregos, and lives in the Chão de Loureiro; knows that a girl of the name of Throgmorton came from London to this city, and resides in the house of the Consul, Thomas Maynard, in the Casa Caidos, in the parish of S. Paulo. She came here with the intention of entering the Convent of St. Brigit as a nun, and received her dowry from a nobleman whose name he does not know, but who lives at S. Roque. Later he had heard that she had become a heretic, though before leaving London she had declared herself a Catholic and as such had been received in this city. An English officer - an ensign - named Carey who came from England had said that the girl was his relation, and was a Catholic. At first she had followed the practices of the Church, and had then gone over to the heretics. Other English heretics had been boasting that they had converted a Roman Catholic, by which

they meant this girl; stated that a preacher had been seen in the house of the Consul, and that a man-servant had said that the girl was of that sect. Further related that an English merchant called Raymond Dagus (sic) living in the Rua das Mudas invited the witness to a dinner which he gave in his house to the Consul and the other English heretics. Among them Edward Salter and the witness were the only Catholics; the former, as his business failed, lived in retirement. The preacher, who was there, tried to dispute with him on matters of religion and finance (Fazenda), decrying the Catholic Faith. Witness and Salter made reply that he had better argue with the Fathers of the College as they, as laymen, were forbidden to enter into arguments. Witness has often had occasion to complain of the manner in which the English heretics spoke of the Catholic Church, but does not remember anyone in particular; it is not his custom to answer them.'

Father Robert, of Sta. Barbra, Confessor to the Nuns of St. Brigit Without The Walls, gave evidence confirming the foregoing particulars.

Conclusions of the Court: That Margaret Throgmorton's faults are very grave, but that as she is a woman, a young girl, and has been brought up among heretics she should be given an opportunity to express her repentance. She must be examined and instructed so that her doubts may be resolved. She must be taken away from the Consul's house where her soul is in imminent peril, and placed in the custody of the Governor of the Prisons, in his own house. She cannot be placed in the prison as at present there are no women there. In the former place she can live in decency till, if necessary, she can be brought before the Board. But before this all documents must be carefully examined.

(this ends the first part of the case).

Second part of the Case. (This part is very confused as the documents are more than usually out of proper order, and some undated).

Jan. 30th 1660. The Consul Thomas Maynard was arrested. When he was gone from his house, Mello de Sousa was sent there to arrest Margaret. He returned and reported that he had been unable to enter the house as the Consul's wife and servants would not open the door, and he dared not break it down for fear of provoking a riot which he had been told to avoid.

He was then instructed to send Margaret an invitation to dine with him, - but she had declined it, giving as a reason that she had been bled, and could not go out until she was recovered from this operation. Mello de Sousa gave it as his opinion that to effect her arrest it would be necessary to enter the house and search it.

Maynard was then brought before the Board. He began by stating that it was his own desire that the affair should be conducted entirely according to the wishes of their Excellencies, the Inquisitors, if he were not lost, deprived of his post, and perhaps even hung thereby, for breaking the Capitulations which granted to the Minister of the Republic of his Nation regarding immunity of domicile without any exception whatever. And he further represented that any infringement of the said Capitulations in this respect would greatly prejudice the success of the Embassy of Dom Francisco de Mello so that the negotiations now in progress in London might break down altogether. For his own part he asked nothing better than to turn the girl out of his house, and if her arrest took place outside it he would make no account of it.

At this point Manuel de Sousa came to report another attempt to enter the Consul's which had failed because many people gathered about it, so that he could do nothing without causing excitement. After an hour's deliberation Sousa and Jorge de Mello were told to go home for fear a riot might be provoked. At the same time some 'familiares' were set to watch the house with instructions to arrest any women who came out of it. Feb. 13th 1660.

Feb. 19th 1660. The English in Lisbon demand to have set at liberty the English Consul who is at present in the prison of the Penitentiary.

The dossier in the Inquisition records ends abruptly at this point. It is possible that papers have been lost, but the following undated and apparently unfinished letter from the Queen Regent suggests that the case may have been dropped for political reasons. It was on the eve of the Restoration, and the position of the Portuguese Ambassador, accredited to the Commonwealth and plotting on behalf of Charles, was already sufficiently delicate:

Endorsement: 'Letter of the Queen Regent to D. Francisco de Mello, her Ambassador in London, on the Arrest which the Holy Office wishes to make of an Englishwoman in the house of the Consul'.<sup>4</sup>

'There came to this city a Roman Catholic woman of the name of Margaret with the intention (so I have been informed) of becoming a nun. After having stayed in other houses, this woman went to that of the Consul, Thomas Maynard, where she was persuaded, either by him or others, to the resolution of following the teachings of Calvin which she now professes. Observing this the Holy Office ordered that she should be arrested by D. Jorge de Mello. D. Manuel de Sousa, however, doubted that the Consul would permit this, asking that this nobleman should first speak with the Inquisitors, which he did. He said that the Consul would promise to bring the girl to the house of Senhor Teixeira on the morrow where she could be arrested without offence to his rights. And because the Consul did not fulfil this promise, he was called before the Inquisition and enjoined to bring the woman as he had said he would. Upon this he declared that he was under no obligation to bring the woman, nor would he consent to her being arrested in his house. On receiving this reply the Inquisitors caused him to be confined in a room in the house of the said Inquisitors, declaring that as long as he did not produce the woman he should not be let go.

I received this account from the Holy Office and enjoined them strongly to treat the Consul well: allowing him to speak and communicate with whom he would, endeavouring meanwhile to come to some arrangement of this business, my Ministers doing all that is possible to modify the attitude of the Consul, and the English who advise him, so that his detention shall not last longer than is possible for me to satisfy the Holy Office. I have made up my mind to leave the girl in the Consul's house and bid the Inquisitors do all they can to save her soul there, there being no other way to satisfy all parties. Up to the present I have not carried out this resolution, but the English are very restive and there are many ships of that nation in the harbour, and they can spread reports in the Commonwealth which are heated and untrue, as they do here. It appears that they

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<sup>4</sup> Lisbon Inquisition, No. 5702

have sent word of this matter by the frigate which sailed under a French Captain's flag with orders which permit him to go where he chooses.'

The claim of the English is that in conformity with their Articles of Peace no vessel of their Commonwealth can be detained or molested in this country on account of a religious question; that their Consul has immunity from arrest either in his own person or that of anyone in his house even by the officers of justice - very much less can the Holy Office arrest him, and which is the more unjust as he has never been of the Catholic Faith. I replied that this Article of the Peace said nothing about English Roman Catholics, who by changing their religion became subject to the punishments of the Holy Office, and that the Treaty referred solely to those English who had never been Roman Catholics and who conformed to the Articles of the said Peace - which excluded those English who do not account themselves subject to the Commonwealth. Also that Consuls enjoyed no immunity as to their persons or their houses, and such is the custom everywhere - particularly at this Court - where there are Consuls of France, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Venice, and many other nations who enjoy no immunity of their persons or houses. And as MSS. of St. Vicente, Vol.23, p. 211:

'To the Holy Office having no jurisdiction over him on account of his not being a Catholic, they have authority given them by the Pope that they are not to be hindered by anyone in making my arrest which they can legitimately claim the right to make. Finally I pointed out that the Holy Office is not mine, I have no authority over it nor over its laws, and that as to what passes in my Kingdom everything that concerns it is referred to Rome.'

The Queen goes into a lengthy explanation as to how she proved (at least to her own satisfaction) that as she neither appointed nor paid the Inquisitors she could not interfere with them.

'The Consul (she continues) is in every way well treated, and has so much liberty that his wife and sons dine with him - an unheard of privilege, and that as to the woman they wish to arrest, whom he keeps in his house, he cannot do this under the claim of immunity. In spite of this position and just reasoning the English complain, and the Consul declares that as soon as he is free he will embark on board ship. I consider that if he talks like this in Lisbon he will do worse in England and in London where they will hear him with prejudice to those privileges which you enjoy, not only in the respect which is your due, but to your harm. You are well acquainted with the Ministers of the Commonwealth and the way this nation proceeds, therefore for safety hide your papers in whatever way may seem best to you. There may be disturbancies on account of this complaint. Should you be in any danger, remove to the French Embassy, or wherever you think best. You may even have to remove to France or Holland, according to your judgment.'

I have half promised the Consul to the Conde de Odemira, as you will see in the original paper I sent you. He (the Consul) has locked the woman in her room in his house with the intention of not opening the door, to show that the arrest has been effected with violence. They look for some gentler means ...'

The letter ends here.

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The following case is that of a rogue, and explains itself:

‘Gordon, George, (alias John Wilson) a Scot, native of Aberdeen, and imprisoned in Lisbon, 30th September 1755.’<sup>5</sup>

This case opens with a long letter in Latin directed to Mr. John Preston. The substance of it is reported in the following interview:

‘Letter from M. Teixeira da Cunha to the Inquisitor General: By order of your Excellencies I went to the prison of ‘Tronco’ and there was brought before me one John Wilson, alias George Gordon. I asked how he came there, where he was born, who were his parents, what his profession, and how he came to be in this city.

He replied that his proper name was George Gordon but that he was known as John Wilson. He was a native of Aberdeen in Scotland, and was son of Peter Gordon and his wife Anne Lauder, both Catholics, as he himself was, having been baptised in his father's house by Alexander ... (illegible) a priest. He is 36 years of age, and is of the clerical profession, having been ordained a priest in 1741 in Rome at the Church of St. John Lateran by the Pope's Vicar called John Antonio Guadani, received the title of missionary of the Order of St. Thomas, and afterwards served as Chaplain to the armies of the Prince of Wales in the Wars of Scotland. He was taken prisoner by the English, and by them exiled to Holland. From the time he was taken prisoner he never said he was a priest, nor even that he was a Catholic. In Holland he joined the Fleet, and made various voyages to Spain. Finally he reached this city in the month of May in this year. The ship was the ‘Maria’ of which the Captain (Francisco Perri) told the authorities that he was an Italian.

Leaving the ship, Gordon went to the College of St. Peter and St. Paul, where he pretended to be a Protestant anxious to embrace Catholicism. Father Preston gave him a paper by which he could enter the College of Catechumens, which he did in the same month of May under name of John Wilson. He remained there for some time till the Rector of the College sent him to Corpo Santo, and from there he was taken to the Holy Office where he abjured the Calvinist Faith in the month of July, some days before the day of Saint Anna. And the same month he was baptised with other heretics, in the Church of San Roque by Father John of the Encarnação, under the name of John Wilson - the same name as he had given to those who arrested him. This is what he declared to me in reply to the questions framed upon the accompanying letter» (the Latin one), and all declared upon oath taken on the Holy Scriptures.

(signed) Manuel Teixeira da Cunha, Sept. 13, 1755’

Da Cunha was sent back to Gordon to ask if he had any documents proving him to be a priest. The latter said that when he was arrested all his papers were taken from him. He added that Dom Oratio Felix, priest and cantor of the Igreja Patriarchal who was with him in the seminary, could prove this.

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<sup>5</sup> Lisbon Inquisition No. 14638.

‘I then went to the said Church’, reports Da Cunha, “and learned from the said priest that Gordon was ordained. He was surprised to hear he was in the city as he had not heard of him for years. He knew he had been sentenced to serve in His Holiness's galleys for 5 years, but did not complete his sentence because he had escaped. I accordingly asked him to come with me to the Tronco prison, where I sent for four Englishmen who were prisoners. Dom Oratio immediately said that the second one was Gordon, and that he was surprised to see him there. Gordon said that he was accused of thefts, to which Dom Oratio replied that that had been his practice in College.’

Dom Oratio was enjoined to say nothing of all this.

A note dated Sept. 19th says that Gordon has been transferred to the Limoeiro. He writes another long Latin letter to the effect that his health is suffering severely from his confinement, and praying that he may be released. This is endorsed by the Chief Inquisitor with the remark that there seems nothing to be gained by setting this man at large.

Less than two months later his release one way or another was effected by the great earthquake. The prisoners in the Limoeiro escaped in large numbers, and added to the general confusion and terror. Many thieves were hung at the Cross of ‘Buenos Ayres’.

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Finally, we have a romance...

**Clark, Margaret**, native of Cork, age 30, ‘living at this Court’ (i.e., Lisbon). Widow of John Clark, daughter of William O’Brien and Ellen his wife, both Catholics:

‘Confesses that she, being a widow, was caught a captive by the passion of love for Abel Scott, bachelor, also native of Cork. He being a Protestant she was clandestinely married to him on a Dutch ship by the Anglican rite in the presence of a protestant Minister on the 28th of April of this year (1791). She makes a full confession which she states to be entirely voluntary, and prays for mercy, the inordinateness of her passion for Abel Scott having blinded her to the gravity of her act. (Certificate of Marriage given by the Dutch Captain is appended).

Signs ‘Margaret Clark’ in a very trembling hand. Margaret was, on the whole, rather lightly dealt with. She was to perform certain penances, and to confess frequently. The sentence passes over Abel Scott in silence.’

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