

SOME MEDIEVAL EPISTOLIC LANGUAGE FEATURES IN THE LATIN LETTERS OF VYTAUTAS THE GREAT *

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Abstract. *The main challenge for anyone who attempts to research or translate medieval epistolary texts is the complexity and specifics of the epistola regia (royal letters) genre. The present article analyses letters written by Vytautas the Great, Grand Duke of Lithuania (1350–1430), focusing on the translation of said letters with regard to special aspects concerning the difficulties faced by the translator. There are no scientific papers which focus on the difficulties in translating Vytautas' letters from Latin. From the nearly 450 surviving letters of the Grand Duke, a large part of them written in Latin, only four Latin letters have been translated to Lithuanian. This article mostly raises issues rather than provides solutions, since the latter would require more extensive research. The aim is to show the qualities of epistolary texts of the Middle Ages, specifically the Latin correspondence of Vytautas, and the problems of translating them into Lithuanian. The greatest attention is given to a special rhythm (cursus), syllabic strategies at the beginning or at the end of a phrase, the listing of proper names, the selection of epithets or even of conjunctions and their usage, etc. I shall argue that such details could provide plenty of additional information for the analysis of the narrative. Therefore, if they are to be lost in research or translation, it would be a definitive deprivation of full understanding of the medieval rhetoric.*

Keywords: *Vytautas, Grand Duke of Lithuania; ars dictaminis; cursus; medieval letters; epistola regia.*

A letter is a specific type of communication or a message predetermined not only by geographic distance, but also by distance in terms of time, information, expression and emotions, which all influence and act specifically on creation, presentation and perception of a message. It must be said that the epistolographic genre was

closely connected with the art of rhetoric from the very beginning of its existence. In the Middle Ages, letters became almost the principal object of the theory of rhetoric. Indeed, they were composed according with the precepts of the formal art of letter writing, known as *ars dictaminis*. At that time, a letter was perceived as a text for listening, as a rhetorical, fine and official speech presented in written form, but very often read aloud in public (*epistola est oratio congrua; epistola est oratio ex constitutis sibi partibus congrue ac distincte composita; legatio litteralis absenti*

* The article is prepared on the basis of my paper *Cultural Translation: Specific of the Translation of Medieval Latin Epistolary Text* presented at the Twentieth Biennial Conference of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric on the topic "Rhetoric across Cultures", held on July 28–31, 2015 at University of Tübingen, Germany.

persone; epistola est supramissio oratio)¹. However, there were also other concepts of a letter, namely those of an appropriately arranged text (*congrua sermonum ordinatio, instituta verborum ordinatio*); professional or private correspondence, based on the means of how information is presented in such a letter to the addressee, either to one who is absent, as well as if it happens to present a routine (*epistola est libellus absenti destinatus persone; cirografus absenti*). There is also a concept of a letter-conversation, which is presented both orally and in writing: it seems that the addresser chats face to face with the addressee who is absent (*ore ad os, absens absenti*) in an effort to influence and please him so as to reach a certain goal (*affectum indicat delegantis; affectum mentis plene significans; mittentis plene significans voluntatem; semper affectum denuntians destinantis; oratio mittentis affectum sua circumscriptione insinuans*). Such letters of private nature are addressed to friends, relatives, beloved ones, etc. (*animum suum debet declarare*). Medieval letter-writing manuals indicate that a text read or listened to by an addressee should not only influence the soul, educate, leave deep

imprints on one's mind, but also please the ears. Oral and written cultures were closely interconnected. It was customary to transfer critical or confidential information orally through messengers or reliable persons². The art of speaking was closely linked with the art of composition, and the effectiveness of a letter was rather conditioned by the way it was presented, but not by its written form³. Eloquence was a valuable asset in the conduct of practical affairs. Therefore, a lot of attention was attached to its preparation, *i.e.*, to the structure, rhetoric expression, exposition of content and continuous accentuation of the main idea, since the reader/listener should possess a proper understanding of the text being read to them, and the addresser must reach one's goals in the most effective manner. These letters obviously consist of several layers: theoretical and obligatory elements, the external code and the personal addresser's expression, their relation to the addressee, the object of the letter and that of described events.

Medieval epistolary texts composed several centuries ago require special attention from a researcher or a translator, because such texts undergo yet another change in their quality – they are read not by their direct addressees, but by those from a new epoch, who possess a different mentality; who, like a sort of voyeurs, read someone others' letters behind their backs.⁴ Consequentially, such a reader

¹ These and others definitions of *epistola* are from manuals of *ars dictaminis* written by: anonymous authors of *Rationes dictandi* (between 1135 and 1143, one of the major textbook, often quoted in the literature, some researchers have the author as an anonymous figure, others (especially the early researchers of the twentieth century) assign it to Albericus from Monte Casino or Magister Bernardus) and *Ars dictandi aus Orleans* (end of 12th c.); Adalbertus Samaritanus (*Præcepta dictaminum*, c. 1111/1118); Magister Gaufridus (*Summa de arte dictandi*, 12th c.); Bene de Florence (*Candela-brum*, c. 1238); Paulus Camaldulensis (*Introductiones dictandi*, end of 12th c.); Thomas de Capua (*Ars dictaminis*, 1220). For more on the definitions of *epistola* within textbooks in the Middle Ages, along with examples, see Keršienė, *Dissertation*, 64–69. Refer to the list of abbreviations in the end of this article.

² See Heinig, 1998, 32, 33; Felten, 1998, 61, 74, 76, 77, 88, 89; Boockmann, 1998, 107; Hlaváček, 1998, 22, 29, 30; Wenzel, 1995, 195, 196, 203, 254–267.

³ See Constable, 1992, 40; Perelman, 1991, 103–104; Witt, 1982, 20, who remarked on the close link between *dictamen* and oratory.

⁴ For more about this theme, see Bossis, 1986; Bödeker, 2004, 199–202; Camiciotti, 2014, 17–24; Czermińska, 1975, 37–41; Cysewski, 1997, 104–109.

might misinterpret some elements due to the fact that they were addressed to another addressee in another time. Thus, it is important to know how we should look at these epistolary letters from our time perspective and what other texts we should be acquainted with in order to know with certainty how one could perceive and “decode” them. Hence, a series of linguistic, textual and transliteration questions arise: for instance, how should one deal with the punctuation particular to a certain time or how one ought to interpret the specific use of the conjunction *and (et)*, which provides the text with a certain special style and was therefore very important, given that the text was intended for listening. Should we modernize the abovementioned archaic, medieval language? Should we maintain the complicated, yet original structures of the sentences and periods, or should we simplify them for the ears of a contemporary reader? Should we correct different errors present in the text? All the previously mentioned determines the choice of a researcher’s/translator’s methods and the course and particularities of a research/translation. In this article, I will give some concrete examples of similar problems a translator or research has to deal with.

One of the first 19th c. scholars who began research on the *ars dictaminis*, prepared a few treatises of the kind for publication and issued his commentaries was Ludwig Rockinger (Rockinger, 1863. BF – see abbreviations). The research on medieval epistolography was intensified in the 20th century. The approach on *ars dictaminis* also changed a lot: its value

in the studies of different areas of life in the Middle Ages was acknowledged. The scholars of the 20th–21st c. use letter and document samples present in the *ars dictaminis* treatises or their separate collections as sources of information for studies of political history with an increasing frequency and treat them as important materials for different researches in history of education, society in general, religious and secular offices and their functioning. They tend to analyze the relationship between the theory and practice of medieval epistolography, the continuity and modifications of Antiquity traditions, as well as links of epistolography with other genres (Murphy, 1971, 1974, 1985; Patt, 1978; Richardson, 2007, Constable, 1976, 1992; Witt, 1982, and others). An article, titled *The Medieval Art of Letter Writing: Rhetoric as Institutional Expression* (1991), written by the American scholar Les Perelman is worth mentioning here. It tackles the issues of the genesis of medieval epistolography, the impact of institutions of the time on its development and the formation of its theoretical work. The scholar’s notes on the succession character and modifications of the classical tradition of rhetoric in the medieval art of letter writing have been fairly important for this research. A lot of information on the *ars dictaminis* specifics had been obtained from the works of Polish and Czech scholars, such as Dušan Třeštík (1962), Grażyna Klimecka (1997), Mieczysław Markowski (1987), and Teresa Michałowska (2006), as they encompass not only Polish or Czech, but also Western European medieval epistolographic tradition and sources, ways of preparation of letter and document collections, their history and development.

In her article, Aistė Kučinskienė discusses how to read epistolical texts in general (Kučinskienė, 2011) and how to prepare letters for publication (Kučinskienė, 2012).

Alongside the publication of epistolary sources of the second half of the 14th c., the German scholar Konrad Burdach, in his monograph *Schlesisch-böhmische Briefmuster aus der Wende des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1926), presented a broad cultural and social context of the Middle Ages, defined many spots of epistolography and epistolics that greatly influenced the development of this theory and practice. The monograph by another German scholar, Carl Erdmann (*Studien zur Briefliteratur Deutschlands im elften Jahrhundert*, 1938), presented and discussed the letter collections compiled in Germany and France by the 11th C., such as those of Meinhard of Bamberg, Hildesheim and collections of the Investiture Controversy period. The author also compared and treated them through the literary and historic aspect, in such a sense even referring to them as literary works; he analyzed the circumstances and locations of the compilation of such letter collections.

It is noteworthy that neither the *ars dictaminis* theory nor its functioning in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania have ever been studied by Lithuanian scholars. As to Lithuanian historiography and literature studies, it must be said that more attention had always been paid to letters written by grand dukes – the earliest known heritage of Lithuanian writings. The publication *Metraščiai ir kunigaikščių laišakai [Annals and the Letters of the Dukes]* (1996) was devoted *inter alia* to the issue of correspondence. The publication authors attempted to analyze the letters written by Grand Duke Gediminas (~1315–1342) in different aspects. The publication also presented an overview of one letter compiled in the Greek language by Grand Duke

Algirdas (1345–1377). A more detailed research of medieval art of letter writing and the European sample letter collections of the end of the 14th – the beginning of the 15th c. without any broader study of theoretical *ars dictaminis* treatises was accomplished by Rūta Čapaitė (1996), who concentrated mostly on the correspondence of Grand Duke Vytautas (Magnus Dux Vitoldus, c. 1350–1430)⁵. The highly informative studies of Rūta Čapaitė (1996; 2001; 2003; 2007) have been applied in the article analysis of Vytautas' letters. This scholar was the first in Lithuania to evaluate Vytautas' letters as samples of the medieval epistolary genre; she also presented their classification criteria and types, analyzed their structure, style, language and emotional nuances; based on Vytautas and his contemporaries' correspondence, she discussed the areas of Vytautas' daily activities and the technical side of his participation in the system of international correspondence. The research performed by Rūta Čapaitė allows us to evaluate Vytautas' epistolary heritage as possessing the qualities of medieval cultural and artistic texts. However, medieval epistolary text translation features are not properly analyzed in that study. Translation theory and methods in general are discussed in

⁵ Vytautas (Vitold, Vytoud, Witaud, Witoud, Wytoud, Wytowd alias/anders Alexander) was the ruler (1392–1430) of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1386, he was re-baptized as a Catholic, receiving the name Alexander. A Lithuanian national leader who consolidated his country's possessions, helped to build up national consciousness and shattered the power of the Teutonic Knights (the Battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg) on July 15, 1410). He exercised great power over Poland. In 1429, Vytautas revived his claim to the Lithuanian crown, and Jogaila, the King of Poland, reluctantly consented to his cousin's coronation as king, but Vytautas died before the ceremony could take place.

articles and monographs by Eugene Albert Nida (1969), Ioanna Irina Durdureanu (2011), Aurelija Leonavičienė (2013), but there is no discourse present specifically on Latin epistolary medieval texts. This question is brought to more detail in the article by Anthony Pym, who claims that “Many of the ideas and models most in tune with medieval translation are nevertheless re-appearing in certain contemporary fields, in new guises, via deviously fashionable detours, and mostly without knowledge of their past” (Pym, 2015, 105).

There are no scientific papers which focus on the difficulties of Vytautas’ letters translation from Latin. This article mostly raises issues rather than provides solutions, as doing so would require more extensive research. The aim is to show the qualities of epistolary texts of the Middle Ages, specifically the Latin correspondence of Vytautas and the problems faced when translating them into Lithuanian. In some instances, for comparison I rely on German letters⁶ of Vytautas, Grand Duke of Lithuania, and his interlocutors. A big part of the correspondence of the Duke of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) was written in Medieval Latin and in Middle High German (German: *Mittelhochdeutsch*). The letter-writing model adopted in GDL permitted the smooth correspondence of the Grand Duke with foreign rulers and his activity on an international level. It was an important political tool that strengthened the authority of the Duke both inside and outside the country. Vytautas, by relying on letters, had administered a huge country, maintained relations, fought and spread propaganda, and some-

times himself had fallen victim to propaganda and political intrigues.

There is no unanimity in scientific literature about the number of existing documents and correspondence of Vytautas, but there is a tendency to assume that Vytautas’ epistolary writings are very fragmentary⁷. A part of epistolary writings are not published and lie somewhere in foreign archives, most of them located in Germany – archives waiting for their discovery. We can only put forward some approximate numbers and say that there are around 450 letters remaining. Only four Latin letters have been translated to Lithuanian. A big part of the correspondence had been lost, but the remaining parts clearly demonstrate that there was an explosion in epistolary communication in the milieu of GDL, which is evidenced by the richness of stylistic expression, the purpose of letters and their diversity in content and topics. The correspondence with foreign addressees is dominant in the epistolary legacy of Vytautas. The Grand Duke corresponded with Sigismund of Luxemburg, the Emperor of Holy Roman Empire and his wife, Jogaila, the King of Poland, Pope Martin V, Eric, the King of Denmark, the Infant Ferdinand of Castile, Grand Masters and other officials of the Teutonic Order, the Burgomaster of Riga and the Riga’s city council, the Bishop of Tartu, the Archbishop of Riga, Henry V of England, and others. His letters include a lot of aspects of a late Middle Ages ruler’s life, ranging from political activity to the needs of daily life.

The *epistola regia* (*royal letters*) is a complex and specific text. The goal of the royal epistolary is not the objectivity of in-

⁶ Citation and examples are from CEV. See list of abbreviations in the end of article.

⁷ See Čapaitė, 2007, 26–27; Kosman, 1969, 93; 1971, 140, 153, 154, 165, 166; Ivinskis, 1986, 27.

formation but rather its political efficiency, sought by different means. It shows the awareness of existing political communication rules and the aspiration to create a positive opinion about oneself. Its characteristic features are logical argumentation, emotional rhetoric, attempts to manipulate and persuade the addressees as well as efforts in taking a dominant position vis-à-vis the addressee. At the same time, one can find stylistic neutrality, uniformity and conventionality determined by the European epistolary canons adopted in medieval Lithuania and communication traditions of that time.⁸

It is only conditional that one can call the rulers of that time “letter writers”, since, for a long time, they were illiterate (*illiterati*) and they were not obliged to write and read due to their status; in daily administration, it was more important that a ruler is able to realize the importance of a written text for the ruling of the country, that he is an attentive listener (*auditor*), who able to understand and memorize a text being read to him, analyze and edit it, rather than a reader (*lector*)⁹. One could try to imagine how a letter of the Grand Duke of Lithuania was “written”: his oral message, his ideas and wishes are roughly written down by a *dictaminist* (*dictator*)¹⁰, then the text is given a rhetorical form which corresponds with that prescribed by the letter-writing canons. Later, the text is most often clean copied and sometimes

also translated into another language. Thus, practically, a scribe has to transform the everyday vocabulary into an almost legal category. Often, the proper ideas of the addresser are dissimulated under the veil of public, political and diplomatic rhetoric, and must pass through the sieve of other languages, thus acquiring their features; therefore, it becomes difficult to distinguish real feelings from manifestations of tradition and canons. An addressee becomes a sort of a co-author of any given letter, since the formal elements, style and even content are adapted to his rank and the level of relations to him. The subjective emotional expressions of an addresser, such as joy, pain, disappointment, yearning, concern, consolation, intimate feelings, personal emotions and impressions, are articulated into rhetorical models and obligatory conventional formulas, familiar only to the appropriate layers of society. It is worth mentioning that even friendly and close relations or family connections between interlocutors were no excuse for not applying epistolary protocol of the time. A ruler’s relationship to the addressee lower in rank remains always patriarchal. A ruler is seen not as an individual, but rather as a figure defined by his status and functions, as an ideal; he is a representative figure with insignia, one who has to observe certain principles and oblige to a code of communication. Thus, there was a split between the language uniformed by the *ars dictaminis* and everyday speech.

As it is already mentioned, the epistolary texts and their expression show that they are intended more for listening than for silent reading. It is first demonstrated by the fact that there are standard phrases at the beginning of every letter that have

⁸ More about *epistola regia* see Keršienė, 2012, 15–52.

⁹ See Perelman, 1991, 98; Murphy, 1974, 197–198; Kiaupienė, Petrauskas, 2009, 142–143; Rowell, 2003, XXXVI.

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion about the meaning of the terms *dictare*, *dictatores*, *dictamen*, *dictaminum*, *ars dictaminis* and their relations, see Keršienė, 2010, 38–40; Constable, 1992, 37–46.

to emphasize that the addressees got the correct meaning of the letter addressed to them: *aperite sensus mentis vestre et opprobria nostra auribus percipite; Litteras vestras nobis missas plena ratione percepimus; Litteras amicitie vestrae intelleximus satis clare; Litteras susceptimus reverenter, quibus diligenter perlectis intelleximus; Litteras paternitatis vestre, ad presens per familiarem vestrum missas sane percepimus ratione; Litteram M^{ci}e. Vre. preclare intelleximus nobis scriptam; Per litteram credencie a Ste. Vra. regia nobis missam intelleximus satis clare* (see CEV, No. 563, 268; No. 740, 392 etc.). Hence, a text intended for listening is composed by considering certain qualities and adopts a number of elements of rhetoric speech¹¹.

The crucial elements of medieval letters which received a lot of attention from scholars and practitioners are the following: a **salutation** (*salutatio*)¹², **appropriate vocatives** and **epithets** intended for either pleasing or honoring, or for expressing a negative attitude towards the addressee, and for the initial phrases of a letter. The introduction of self and the addressee and the social identification are emphasized in the salutations of medieval letters, which partially condition the nature, content and

style thereof. In the textbooks on the *ars dictaminis*, the chapters on *salutatio* contain the models of appropriate behavior and etiquette almost for every possible situation of correspondence discourse in respect to the current organizational models, specifying who (what they are like) writes to whom (what they are like) about what (the purpose of writing) and to which salutation (relating to the content) do they render. In this way, a certain model of communication is composed, reflecting the close interconnection between the *ars dictaminis* and the classical rhetoric¹³. The majority of textbooks contain the rules on the titular order of the addresser and addressee¹⁴ and appropriate terms: *salutatio*

¹³ Medieval specific communicative model in letters by *ars dictaminis* professionals: see one of the first theoretical treatises of Albericus Casinensis, *Flores rhetorici*, 38: *In primis pensetur persona mittentis, persona cui mittitur, pensetur inquam vel sit sublimis, vel humilis, vel amicus vel hostis, postremo cuiuscumque modi vel fortunae sit. Altera manet consideratio an iustam rem vel iniustam, an ingentem vel modicam exigat. Tertium est ut qua intentione quaerat scriptor examinet, dico superbe vel humiliter, dure vel leniter, minis, blandiciis, iusticia vel amicitiae fiducia.*

¹⁴ Structure of the beginning (*salutatio*) of letters by *ars dictaminis* professionals: Thomas Capuanus especially detailed the composition of salutation, separating salutations intended for clergy from those for secular persons: "The contemporary society has established the universal rules intended for all possible salutations, i. e., [formula God's] grace, then the rank after the title and the vocative of the clergyman; [if intended for secular persons] it is composed of their characterisation, origin, position, honouring, location of origin, notability, contributions, responsibilities and significance. The first couple of lines partially belong to the addresser, since he has to provide his name in the first place" (*Ad universitatem tamen omnium salutationum, que fieri possunt, a modernis sunt notule introducte, scilicet gratia, post titulum ordo, cleri mansuetudo; [sed] virtus, linea, conditio, dilectio, patria, cognitio, laus, locus et dignitas, [si laici] etiam contineantur. Primi duo versiculi sunt ex parte mittentis, quando scilicet suum nomen preponere debet ille, qui mittit*), see Thomas Capuanus, *Ars dictaminis*, 20.

¹¹ Compare the structure of the medieval letter: 1. *Salutatio* (*generalis sententia, proverbium, diversitas personarum*); 2. *Captatio benevolentiae / Exordium*; 3. *Narratio*; 4. *Petitio / Argumentatio* (*not always*); 5. *Conclusio* and of rhetoric speech: 1. *Exordium*; 2. *Narratio*; 3. *Divisio*; 4. *Argumentatio*; 5. *Refutatio*; 6. *Conclusio*.

¹² The *salutatio* was associated with hand shaking at greeting or with the house threshold or fundament. More about theory of *salutatio* see Keršienė, *Dissertation*, 71–79. Perelman explains in her article how *salutatio* gained importance in medieval letters and in theoretical discussions about it, see Perelman, 1991, 104–105.

praescripta (written before), *subscripta* (written after) and *circumscripta* (inscribed, described)¹⁵.

Usually, another ruler was addressed by epithets indicating the equality in status and rank of both interlocutors, i. e., a kind of “rulers’ brotherhood”, and signifying not only friendly relationships, but also respect and the intention to maintain friendship with neighbors (of course, if the addresser’s and the addressee’s relations are friendly). Besides, the epithets implying the membership in a Christian community, family ties or obedience to the rules of manor courtesy may have been used. One or several epithets appropriate for the addressee’s state or rank were provided yet in the address. On necessity, they may have added either a formula expressing the addresser’s emotional relation to the addressee, or an inscription about the importance and urgency of the message, or both: *to our friend, to our beloved friend, to our special friend, to our highly beloved friend*¹⁶ (*amicis nostris; amici nostri dilecti; amico nostro carissimo; amico nobis sincere dilecto; venerabiles amici nostri; egregii et honorabiles amici nostri dilecti*;¹⁷ *unserm frunde; unserm liebim frunde; unserm besunderem frunde; unszerm besundern liben frunde*¹⁸). The more they wanted to highlight the relation

to the addressees, the more elaborately they were described: the usual formulas were expanded and detailed. Such delicate nuances had to be considered while translating. The changing of the word order resulted in a loss of original accents of given phrases due to the rhythmic changes, although the meaning remained unaltered: instead of *to our dearest friend*, they used *to our dear and exceptional friend*. The formula that expresses the sender’s emotional relationship with the addressee in the letters of Vytautas and his interlocutors is as follows:

Serenissime princeps et domine magnifice graciose; Illustris princeps magnifice domine persincere; Serenissime princeps magnifice domine graciose; Illustris princeps magnifice domine dilecte; Sme. rex, princeps magnifice, domine singulariter graciose nobisque sincere dilecte; Illustri et serenissimo principi et domino domino Alexandro alias Wytoldo dei gracia magno duci Lytwanie domino meo graciosissimo et patri etc.; Illustrissime princeps domine noster graciosissime; Serenissime princeps et domine frater noster carissime; frater et amice charissime; amico nostro in Christo; amico nostro carissimo; consanguineo nostro carissimo; principi nobis sincere dilecto; affine noster charissime; amice et affinis noster charissime et singulariter observandissime; serenissime princeps et domine domine meus gratiosissime; gratiosissime domine; praeclare princeps illustris frater noster carissime etc.

However, a polite appeal did not always signify a good relationship between the interlocutors – sometimes it expressed a portion of bitter irony. Such letters are full of polite epithets and vocatives; nevertheless, the content, mood and literary form of the letter render the opposite. We can notice that they avoided favorable formulas at the

¹⁵ In the treatise *Rationes dictandi*, the salutation is defined as wishing health, following the rules correspondent to the social rank of the addressee (*Salutatio est oratio salutis affectum indicans a personarum situ non discordans*), see *Rationes dictandi*, Rockinger, 1863. BF, 10–11.

¹⁶ More about this see Čapaitė, 1996, 56–57.

¹⁷ See CEV, No. 1358, 837; No. 392, 168; No. 1141, 633; No. 563, 268 etc.

¹⁸ See CEV, No. 1291, 774; No. 1197, 699; No. 1213, 714; No. 1200, 709; No. 1331, 826; No. 1429, 921 etc.

time of serious political conflicts. For instance, after the failed mission of the margrave Salcbach, Vytautas addressed his reproachable, bitter and rather arrogant letter to Ulrich von Jungingen dated the 6th May 1409 as follows: *Deme erwirdigen herren herren Vlrich van Jungingen, homeister dutsches ordens, **unsirm besundern libin frunde** ane zumen (To the Honourable Lord, Sir Ulrich van Jungingen, the Grand Magister of the German Order, Our Highly Beloved Friend, without any delay)* (CEV, No. 396, 174). There are some more examples, such as Vytautas' letters to his cousin Jogaila, the King of Poland, which are rather angry and presenting claims, as they are written in the period of tense political relationships between them and thus are full of emotional and offensive rhetoric language¹⁹: *Serenissime princeps et domine **frater noster carissime!**; Vestra Serenitas!; Serenissime princeps!; **Frater dilecte!**; **Frater dilecte** diligimus vos sicut nosmet, oramusque deum pro vobis uti pro nobis et plus favendo vobis honorem,*

¹⁹ Emotional, ironic, picturesque phrases and rhetorical questions in these letters: *Apud vos eciam sepe contingit, patrem esse bonum et non semper talem filium; Qualis igitur est iste amicus vester qui vobis huiusmodi conficta mendacia intimare non erubescit?; Quare igitur eum pro eo non castigatis, immo pro huiusmodi excessu ad presens est vester maximus et precipuus consiliarius?; Sed quid boni vobis et regno exinde eveniet, proh dolor! sensietis(!); hiatu cupido pocius aspirantes; nullo penitus habito recordio caritatis; per malignam ingratitude, ipsorum totaliter obliti captorum a nobis multipliciter beneficiorum; immo morsus gestant angvineos sub humili specie columbarum; O si pocius consciencie suos libros legerent ex adverso, o quantas in eisdem invenirent de se accusatorias lecciones, de pravatoris sententiis involutas! Ipsi quidem pro modico reputant quod a viginti quattuor annis stavimus fidei catholice in augmento, sed in terra Prutenorum quos a ducentis vel ultra possident annis, quanta fecerint, cur non dicunt? [...] Cur tacent, noxas proprias explicare? See CEV, No. 1345; 1352; 1355 etc.*

*vitam longiorem et omne bonum sicut et nobismet, immo magis; Nunc autem non intelligimus et miramur*²⁰.

We can find a rather large portion of irony and anger in the letter to Jogaila, dated the 24th March of 1429, on the subject of Hussites, which is reproachable and claiming that Jogaila had written nothing specific on the topic to Vytautas and generally refused to listen to his advice. Aggravated by Jogaila's conduct, the Grand Duke of Lithuania ironically declared the following:

*Item multa immo infinita de dispositione factorum modernorum vobis scriberemus, sed **videmus quod ad litteras nostras nobis quidquam non rescribitis**, ob hoc iam non est opus ut vobis tam multa scribamus, iam enim de facto cognoscimus quid agitur. Ceterum scribitis ut novitates vobis scriberemus apud nos occurrentes, **nullas scimus; solum audivimus quomodo heretici crescunt et quotidie confortantur quodque vos ipsis favetis**. Iste sermo apud nos multum dilatatur et crescit et est valde mirabilis. **Alia nova non habemus nisi quod in istis partibus nostris est magna tranquillitas et pax, et omne bonum audimus.***²¹

Here we can remember how the textbooks on the *ars dictaminis* describe and illustrate – with examples – the ruler's address to the addressee in respect to their favorable (*placatus*) or hostile (*iratus*) attitudes:

*Imperator igitur **placatus** ad quemlibet scribentem sibi subditum, tam ad archiepiscopum quam ad episcopum, hoc modo: .H. imperator semper augustus Coloniensi archiepiscopo gratiam suam*

²⁰ From Vytautas to the King of Poland Jogaila, 17th February 1429: CEV, No. 1345, 815; see too No. 1352, 826–830.

²¹ CEV, No. 1355, 832–833.

*et omne bonum. Similiter ad quemlibet sibi subditum, similiter quilibet rex ad suos subditos scribens. Iratus vero nullam salutationem premitet, hoc modo: .H. Dei gratia Romanorum imperator semper augustus Treverensi archiepiscopo vel comiti vel cuilibet duci vel principi vel ironicam salutationem, scilicet quod meruit, quod equipollet imprecationi.*²²

In the chapter *De diversitate personarum*, Master Gaufredus reflected as follows:

“Personarum autem **alie sunt hostiles, alie non. Hostis hosti** non supplicat uel uix supplicat, sibi que salutationem non destinat, quia sese mutuis rancoribus persecuntur. Quibus autem circumlocutionibus hostes inuicem contantur, per tale patefiat exemplum: *Philippus Dei gratia Rex Francorum procuratori Sathane Saladino in laqueos incidere quos tetendit.* Vel sic: *Salutem quam meruit.* Vel sic: *Iram Dei quam prouocat inuenire.* Vel sic: *Non aue salutiferum, set ue mortiferum.* Vel sic: *Eterne calamitatis augmentum.* Vel sic: *Eternam per antifrasim sospitatem.* Vel sic: *Quidquid lupus ouicule.* Vel: *Quidquid accipiter turturi uel columbe.* Et quoniam **in maledicendo quantumlibet dociles sumus, et semper procliuior usus in peiora datur, hoc de hostili salutatione** sufficiat prelibasse.”²³

²² Aurea Gemma “Gallica”, 1.30: “Thus, a calm emperor writing to anyone subject to him, whether to an archbishop or to a bishop, in this manner: *H., emperor, forever august, to the archbishop of Cologne, his grace and all good things.* Similarly, to anyone else subject to him; similarly, any king writing to his subjects. But an angered <emperor> sends no salutation, in this manner: *H., by the grace of God emperor of the Romans, forever august, to the archbishop of Trier* or to a count or to any duke or prince, or he sends an ironical salutation, namely what the recipient deserves, which is equivalent to an imprecation”.

²³ Magister Gaufredus (*Summa de arte dictandi*), 1966, 886–887: *Hence some individuals are hostile while others not. Enemies never or almost never ask submissively for anything from each other and they never intend salutations for each other since they pierce each*

Translators sometimes face a dilemma of how to correctly translate the Latin vocatives and epithets that often are similar and intend to exactly convey the addresser’s relation to the addressee. Traditionally, there are standard vocatives, like clichés based on specific predetermined patterns, as the addresser and the addressee recognized unification and valued it more than individualism. However, the addressers of emotional letters selected the vocatives more carefully. Sometimes translators could use etymology, but it is not always helpful; they could then rely only on the research of context and their own sense.

Vytautas’ letters also contain other literary stylistic means inherent to this period and generally intended for any rhetoric text, namely **contrast, repetition and synonymy**, as well as coherent argumentation, metaphor phrases or clichés with rhetoric exclamations, abundant repetitions and figurative sayings. Certain words conveyed specific emotions and relations, and often the event that invoked the given emotions would be described. For instance, Vytautas’ letters contain formulas of rigid emotional expression used in European medieval epistolary, such as the heart motive, the call for God and certain

other with mutual spite. Furthermore, they exchange slander as the following example reveals: Philip, the King of Franks by God’s Grace, to the Procurator, the Satanic Saladin, whom he intended to coax into the trap. Or as follows: [Sending] the salutation as deserved. Or as follows: [Wishing] God’s wrath, summoning to deserve it. Or as follows: Wishing no health but death. Or as follows: [Wishing] endless progression of disasters. Or as follows: [Wishing] permanent impediments to success. Or as follows: Wishing everything that a wolf may wish a poor sheep. Or as follows: [Wishing] everything that a hawk [may wish] a poor dove. Since we [all] pose at least some sense while spreading slander and it is always easier to exploit bad things, it is enough to speak about the hostile salutation.

emotional exclamations: *Sed quid boni vobis et regno exinde eveniet, proh dolor! sensietis (!)* (“Yet what good for you and the kingdom can come out of this, oh woe! You will see (!)”) ²⁴. *Nam vulnus inmedicabile quod intentabant occulte adversum nos sub amici specie, sub medici cura, iam putruit et cordis intima, proch dolor, violenter invasit* („Indeed, the incurable wound that they opened in us secretly, playing friends, playing healers, has already festered and, **oh woe!** fiercely penetrated the very **heart**”) ²⁵. *Maxima nos in nostris oculis confudit infamia, nos, quod dolenter referimus, perfidis similem proditoribus denotando* (“We are badly insulted and thus suffering a heartache for he deemed us similar to the betrayer who broke the woe”) ²⁶. *Quod sub paciencie virtute sufferentes, animum nostrum ratione a motu subito refrenante, dum coram magistro generali totoque conventu cruciferorum super huiusmodi infamia nostram querimoniam posuissemus, sepius petentes tanti criminis ulcionem* (“Yet standing this patiently, we restrained our feelings to prevent the outburst while presenting our complaint [querimoniam] about this disgrace in the presence of the grand magister and the whole meeting of crusaders, seeking more often for punishment for such a huge crime”) ²⁷.

Often, we can find lively **narrations of dialogues, direct speech**, and similar phrases framing such rendition of conversations, as well as dynamics and expression of the narrated events. Usually, the sender’s voice is “heard”, and their emotions are rendered in detail. There is also a specific textual rhythm (**cursus**), in-

tended to facilitate the understanding and perception of the text that is being read or spoken, carefully selecting and arranging words and phrases, and even considering the length of syllables at the beginning or at the end of a sentence or a phrase ²⁸. Besides, we can find long periods composed of sentences connected in a specific medieval manner: using **the conjunction and**. In miscellaneous letters on several subjects, the transition between topics is marked by the words *auch/ouch* (also) or *et*, and by repeated vocatives or similar elements. The presentation of the topic is started by repeatedly addressing the addressee, using one of the necessary phrases in respect to the situation. A translator faces the issue of dealing with the frequently used conjunctions. How ought the usual rhythmic and acoustic structures inherent to the Latin language be preserved? Are they even necessary for the contemporary reader? The use of conjunctions is discussed in the textbooks on the *ars dictaminis*:

Verumtamen, ne promissum uideatur in aliquot pretermissum, de clausularum coniugio quantum ad narrationem pertinent est addendum. Debent enim coniungi clausule

²⁸ More about the *cursus* in salutations of Vytautas’s letters see Doubek, 1930, 505–529. See too Constable, 1976, 51; Cornelius, 2010, 313–330. The thirteenth-century French teacher Pontius of Provence written: *Cursus est matrimonium spondeorum cum dactylis prolatione lepida celebratum. Ad hoc enim cursus inventus est, ut per eum vocalium et cuiusque vocis asperitas evitetur; et hoc secundum antiquos. Secundum vero modernos cursus inventus est, ut per eum competentius et magis ornate clausula et tota epistola profeatur* (“*Cursus* is the marriage of spondees with dactyls, commemorated with an elegant delivery. Indeed, *cursus* was developed in order to avoid the rough collision of vowels and of any other sound. This is what the ancients say. According to recent writers, *cursus* was developed so that the clause and letter as a whole might be delivered with better agreement and more ornamentation”), see Thurot, 1868, 481.

²⁴ CEV, No. 1352, 829.

²⁵ CEV, No. 427, 199.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

*ad inuicem competenter; quia, sicut lapides in muro a se discrepant et recedunt nisi reconcilietur eorum societas interuentu cimenti, ita narrationis clausule secum dissidunt et controuersantur; nisi earum renouetur amicitia aduerbiorum et coniunctionum ligaminibus interiectis. Que omnia tediosum esset integraliter enumerare quedam tamen expedit sub numero coartari, hec scilicet: **Cum, dum, iam, qualiter, quantum, ubi et ibi, inde, unde, et multa alia.** Similiter, coniunctiones sunt he: **Ne, set, interea, ceterum, alioquin, preterea, propterea, enim, uerum, uerumtamen, quamuis, porro, licet, autem, et si qua sunt similia.** Et nota quod iste tres coniunctiones enim, uero, autem numquam sunt inchoatiue clausularum. **Debent autem distincti esse colores rethorici qui narrationem picturant.** Et, ut michi uidetur, melius locantur pulcra uerba in principio et in fine quam in medio clausularum (Magister Gaufredus (*Summa de arte dictandi*), 1966, 907–908).*

I would like to pay attention to the translation of **paired synonyms** and **the rhetoric repetition of words**. These are two rhetoric stylistic figures inherent to the letters of this time and discussed in textbooks. They both are regarded as figures of the high style in the theoretic works of medieval epistolary (Burdach, 1926, 106–120; Čapaitė, 1996, 92). Some scholars supposed that synonymy and especially rhetoric repetition of words were not appropriate for the low style; nevertheless, if otherwise appropriate, they were inserted in the examples of formula texts drafted in the low style. In the correspondence of the Grand Duke, the synonymy and especially the rhetoric repetition of words depend on the type and purpose of a letter. Although hardly found in simple informing letters, they were widely used in the epithet descriptions of nobles and for expressing

intense emotions, high wishes and desires as well as in persuasion and argumentation and in seeking to provide information more figuratively and suggestively or to describe events or actions, etc. The comparison of the synonymy of Vytautas and his interlocutors reveals the use of the same or slightly varying synonyms and their compounds. The use of synonyms is associated with the attitude of the epistolary scholars of that time that any purpose can be achieved by finding the most appropriate words to express one's thoughts and feelings. Synonyms can help describe any event or feeling more comprehensively and in more detail (Burdach, 1926, 100–128, Lausberg, 1990, 315–325). We can relatively define two types of the usage of synonyms. With the aim to avoid repetition of the same word, it is replaced by another word of identical meaning and value. This makes the text more effective and associative. The second type of synonymy is the use of two words equal or similar in meaning for an expression of the same concept or thing, although when seemingly one would be enough. However, the second word interpreting the first one often enforces the effect of the former, and thus different natures of the synonyms expand the framework of the given concept. This contributes to the clarity and accuracy of the given phrases, and the read or spoken text becomes more colorful²⁹.

²⁹ Some examples of pairs of synonyms from CEV: *Animo et sensu percipimus; Tristamus et super omnem modum dolemus; Magna tranquillitas et pax; Dilacio et evasio; Gravissime opprimitur et destruitur; Qui dietenus crescunt et confortantur; In detractionem et derisionem; Nos vero consuluimus et ad presens pervalde suademus; Audivimus quomodo heretici crescunt et quotidie confortantur; Admiramur super eo nec mirari possumus; Cum magna placencia et gratitudine; Sine consilio et consensu; Cogitare*

Sometimes, one is required to rack one's mind in trying to translate the delicately nuanced synonyms, all the while keeping the original meaning and the addresser's purpose, which is achieved by accurately selecting words and emphasizing the important thoughts, events or descriptions.

As mentioned above, the letters of the Grand Duke contain rhetoric repetitions of words. On the one hand, the textual aesthetics disapproved frequent repetitions of the same words or phrases. On the other hand, the repetition of words as a stylistic figure was used not because of any scarcity of vocabulary, but for a definite effect. Likewise, it is one of the ways to express the nuances of thoughts and to adorn the language. Repetitions emphasize the author's statements and beliefs and contribute to the solemnity of the text (Čapaitė, 1996, 93–94). According to medieval scholars, those nuances may be easier perceived by hearing than learned from words (Burdach, 1926, 114). The rhetoric repetition of words was diverse. They used to repeat the same or similarly articulated words either in a single sentence, i. e., in different fragments thereof, or in parallel sentences. Moreover, the same phrase repeated in another place of the sentence may sound differently due to the rhythm. In the same letter by Vytautas, this phrase is repeated three times (CEV, No. 1355): *Nobis nichil penitus rescribitis; Nobis omnino nichil rescribitis; Quod ad litteras nostras nobis quidquam non rescribitis*; in the other letter, it is iterated again (No. 1356): *Tunc no-*

inceptimus et desuper tractare; Nos et terras nostras invadere et opprimere; Pro quo apud eundem dominum regem Polonie instetimus et laboravimus; Nec capere intellectu, nec possumus amplecti racione; Mit begerlichin fleisigen bethen; So kunnen wir nicht noch en mogen.

bis semper de ea intimastis; Et de eo nobis nichil intimastis; Magister nobis intimavit; Intimaverunt nobis Hussite; Ideo vos petimus; petimusque vos; Ideo petimus, quid ab eis audieritis, nobis ea velitis intimare. Let us observe how Grand Duke Vytautas, in repeating the same words in the whole letter, emphasizes his affinity with the Christian faith to a foreign king: *Amico in Christo nobis charissimo; salutem et perfectam in Christi nomine caritatem; Sane audivimus libentissime de tam longi[n]quis mundi partibus vos nobis in caritate Jhesu Christi coniunctos et quod fortuitis felicitatis eventibus ab altissimo fruimini; Nam et nos ipsi deo nostro agentes gratias in fidei sancte augmento debita fungimur corporea sospitate; Altissimus igitur personam vestram conservare dignetur propellendo hostem sancte fidei parcium illarum incurssu hostiali atque fero* (Rowell, 2004, 171–172).

Thus, all details, even those that seem insignificant from the first sight, are important in medieval letters. The epistolary formulas reflect the mentality and expectations of the society of that time, as well as the complete or evolving images of the government, particulars of communication and traditional or changing communicative behavior. These particular semantic signs are sometimes lost in the translations of letters. Therefore, the narrative part of a letter, dictated by the ruler, shall not be the only interesting and important aspect for scholars and translators. They ought to likewise appreciate other elements that express certain attitudes towards addressees in unified ways and reveal tense or friendly relationships of the interlocutors, etc. The translators of medieval letters must also be attentive in rendering the text that is

designed for listening, not reading and in conveying the original structure, style, particulars, rhetorical figures and delicate nuances.

Nevertheless, translators do not always manage to avoid deviations from the logical and rhetoric expression of the original phrase. Perhaps sometimes they fail to render the exact semantic content of rhetoric formulas and synonyms, for it had originated and functioned in the semantic word compounds long before the period discussed in this article. Furthermore, we must translate a definite part of the texts, for instance, the epithets of titles and salutation formulas, in a descriptive way due to the absence of Lithuanian equivalents. Besides, we should mention that there was no unified German spelling throughout the

period from the end of the 14th century to the beginning of the 15th century – and the Latin language was varying, too. Often enough, the same word repeated in the same letter was spelled differently.

A Ruler's letter is akin to the two faces of the Roman god Janus, simultaneously containing traditional and innovative traits. Therefore, a researcher owes the following: to pay attention to the multiple semantics of this kind of text and to find its essential code; to explore it synchronically and diachronically, employing its linguistic, cultural, historic and psychological research aspects; to comprehend the interconnections that have existed for a number of ages and dialectics between publicity and privacy; to hear and understand the message of the text from the past.

ABBREVIATIONS

CEV = Prochaska, Antoni, ed. 1882. *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi Magni Ducis Lithuaniae 1376–1430*, Cracoviae.

Keršienė, *Dissertation* = Keršienė, Dovilė. 2010. *Epistolografija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje XIV–XVI amžiuje: nuo ars dictaminis iki literatūrinio laiško*, [Epistolography in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 14–16 Century: from *Ars dictaminis* to Literary Letter], [dissertation], Vilnius.

KP = Heimann, H. D., Hlaváček, I., hrsg. 1998.

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Rockinger, 1863. BF = Rockinger, Ludwig. *Briefsteller und Formularbücher des elften [sic] bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, (Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte, t. 9)*. München: bei Georg Franz, (ed. recentior: New York: B. Franklin, 1961). Available at: <http://www.archive.org/stream/quellenunderrte00rudhgoog#page/n9/mode/1up>

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KAI KURIOS VIDURAMŲŲ EPISTOLINĖS KALBOS YPATYBĖS LOTYNIŠKUOSE VYTAUTO DIDŲIOJO LAIŠKUOSE

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S a n t r a u k a

Viduramžių epistoliniai tekstai buvo rašomi pagal laiškų rašymo mokslo ir meno taisykles – *ars dictaminis*. Tai ilgaamžės retorikos tradicijos tęsa, pako-reguota konkrečios epochos visuomeninių, politinių, socialinių, kultūrinių realijų. *Ars dictaminis* pirmiausia pradėtas naudoti bažnyčios hierarchų bei pasaulietinių valdovų raštuose, vėliau perimtas ir naudotas Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės valdovų kanceliarijoje rengiant dokumentus ir laiškus. Dažniausiai laiškas buvo suprantamas kaip klausyti skirtas tekstas, kaip retorinė kalba, pateikta raštu, taip pat kaip tinkamai sutvarkytas tekstas arba pokalbis, perduodamas gyvu balsu ir raštu. Straipsnyje, parengtame pranešimo *Cultural Translation: Specific of the Translation of Medieval Latin Epistolary Text*, skaityto tarptautinėje konferencijoje *Rhetoric across Cultures* (Tübingen, 2015 m. liepos 28–31 d.), pagrindu aptariama viduramžių valdovo laiškų specifika. Tyrimo šaltiniai – Lietuvos kunigaikščio Vytauto Didžiojo (apie 1350–1430) ir jo korespondentų laišškai, išleisti Antonio Prochaskos sudarytame rinkinyje *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi Magni Ducis Lithuaniae 1376–1430* (Cracoviae, 1882). Į lietuvių kalbą yra išversti tik 4 lotyniški Vytauto laišškai, nors yra išlikę apie 450 jo laiškų skaičiuojant kartu su rašytais kitomis kalbomis. Nėra ir mokslinių darbų, kuriuose būtų analizuojamos lotyniškų šio valdovo laiškų vertimo į lietuvių kalbą ypatybės. Šis straipsnis skirtas daugiau iškelti problemas, nei jas galutinai išspręsti, nes tam reikia detalesnių ir platesnių tyrimų, skaitlingesnių vertimų. Straipsniu siekiama parodyti, kokio pobūdžio yra viduramžių epistoliniai tekstai,

konkrečiai lotyniškoji Vytauto korespondencija, į ką reikia kreipti ypatingą dėmesį juos verčiant ir tiriant.

Epistola regia (royal letters) – sudėtingas darinys. Vienas valdovo epistolikos tikslų – ne nešališkos informacijos pateikimas, bet politinis efektyvumas, kurio siekiama įvairiais būdais, joje realizuojama valdžios reprezentacija, egzistuojančių politinės komunikacijos taisyklių samprata, siekis kurti apie save teigiamą opinią. Jai būdinga dalykinė argumentacija, emociinga retorika, bandymas manipuluoti adresatu, jį įtikinti, užimti dominuojančią poziciją adresato atžvilgiu, ir kartu tam tikras stilistinis neutralumas. Valdovo laiškuose esama specifinio teksto ritmo (*cursus*), kuriuo buvo siekiama palengvinti skaitomo ar sakomo teksto supratimą ir pajautimą, labai atidžiai parenkant ir išdėstant žodžius, frazes, net žodžių skiemenų ilgumą sakinio ar frazės pradžioje ar pabaigoje. Čia svarbi kiekviena, iš pirmo žvilgsnio atrodanti nereikšminga detalė, pvz., vardų eiliškumas, žodžių, epitetų, kreipimosi frazių parinkimas, specifinis išdėstymas ir jų vartojimo dažnumas ir t. t. Tai yra tam tikri semantiniai ženklai, kurie kartais prarandami verčiant laišką į kitą kalbą.

Įdomi ir svarbi tyrėjui, vertėjui yra ne vien naratyvinė laiškų dalis, kurią diktudavo valdovas, bet ir kitos dalys, kurios unifikuotai išreiškia tam tikrą siuntėjo emocinę nuostatą adresato atžvilgiu, kurios gali nurodyti įtemptus ar draugiškus koresponduojančių santykius ir kt. Straipsnyje atkreipiamas dėmesys į pasveikinimų, kreipinių, epitetų ypatumus, taip pat į literatūrinių, stilistinių, lingvistinių priemo-

nių – kontrasto, kartojimo, sinonimijos, viduramžinių emocijų raiškos formulių, teksto ritmo *cursus*, dažno jungtuko *et* kartojimo, taip pat epistolinių formulių svarbą viduramžių laiškuose ir jų kai kuriuos

niuansus. Tyrinėjant per laiką nutolusius laiškus reikia išskirtinio tikslumo ir atidumo, kad sugebėtume „teisingai“ suprasti ne tik parašytas, bet ir paslėptas laiško prasmes.

Gauta 2016 11 02

Priimta publikuoti 2016 12 05

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