



Lesson 125

Revisiting the Diadochi Wars

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In this lesson, we are going to take a look back at the 4th Diadochi War and Pyrrhic War.

Pyrrhus in Macedonia: The Fourth Diadochi War

317 BC- Cassander's Dictatorship

In the beginning verses of Daniel 11, we are told Alexander the Great's kingdom was divided between four of his generals after he died. This, however, is a simplified version of the events that took place. After he died, Alexander's kingdom was divided amongst many generals, but after a series of wars called the Diadochi Wars, only four remained. But previous to the final four, there was a general named Cassander. Cassander was the son of Antipater, who was a general of Alexander the Great. However, in 319 BC, as Antipater grew old and would soon die, he transferred control of Macedon (the land he ruled) to Polyperchon, another general, not to his son Cassander. Enraged at this decision, Cassander sought help from three other of Alexander the Great's generals: Antigonus, Ptolemy and Lysimachus, in order to overthrow Polyperchon. In 317 BC, Cassander was able to take control of one of Macedon's powerful city states called Athens. He declared himself the ruler of the state, but instead of directly ruling himself, Cassander put Demetrius of Phaleron in charge. Demetrius of Phaleron went on to rule Athens for the next ten years.

307 BC- Demetrius frees Athens

Demetrius Phalereus was not allowed to stay in power as governor of Athens forever. He was a dictator and he favored the upper class, so in 307 BC he was overthrown (he was in power for 10 years). That year Demetrius I of Macedon besieged Athens and deposed him, returning Athens to a democracy. Cassander, of course, didn't like this because he lost control of the city. He went into an alliance with Lysimachus, Ptolemy I Soter, and Seleucus I Nicator against Demetrius and his father Antigonus I Monophthalmus (the one-eyed). These actions started the fourth Diadochi War.

303 BC- Demetrius and Pyrrhus become allies

In 303 BC, another figure got involved in the Macedonian squabbles. His name was Pyrrhus I. He had a rough road to the throne of Epirus but, for now, he was the sole ruler. He decided to go into an alliance with one of the opposing sides. He went into alliance with Demetrius I of Macedon, sealing it through the marriage of Demetrius and his [Pyrrhus'] older sister, Deidamia I.

301 BC- The battle of Ipsus

After taking control of Macedon, Antigonus and Demetrius began invading other territories owned by Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Cassander. Demetrius tried to invade Egypt, but his reinforcements were delayed by a storm, so he halted the invasion. He invaded the island of Rhodes, which was occupied by Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Cassander, but eventually made a compromise with them. Then Antigonus started taking control of Greece, which was ruled by Cassander at the time. Cassander tried to make peace with him, but when that didn't work, Cassander sought help from Lysimachus. These two sent requests to Ptolemy and Seleucus, another one of Alexander's generals who occupied the eastern territory of Alexander's former kingdom. Thus, a four-way alliance was formed against Antigonus and Demetrius. In 302 BC Lysimachus, with the help of half of Cassander's army, began invading Antigonus' territory. When Antigonus found out, he marched to fight against them. Lysimachus decided to fight until Seleucus could arrive with reinforcements, so he switched camps to a new one 40 miles away. Antigonus followed him there and laid siege to the camp. When Lysimachus ran out of food, he snuck his army out of the camp at night during a storm, Antigonus tried to follow him again, but ended up abandoning the pursuit. However, when Antigonus heard that Seleucus was on his way, he told Demetrius to bring his army to help fight. Since Demetrius and Cassander had been fighting, when Demetrius left, Cassander was able to send more reinforcements to Lysimachus. The two armies met in 301 in a grassland near Ipsus. On one side there was Lysimachus, much of Cassander's army, and Seleucus. On the other side was Antigonus and Demetrius, and Pyrrhus was also there. During the battle Seleucus was able to use his 400 war elephants to create a wall that separated Antigonus from the majority of his army. This allowed the allies (Lysimachus, Cassander, and Seleucus) to pick off soldiers until Antigonus himself was killed. When Demetrius heard the news, he knew that he had lost the battle, so he retreated with a few thousand soldiers. Antigonus had been the strongest general remaining, and with his death, Alexander the Great's kingdom was finally split amongst the four generals Daniel 11:4 speaks of.

298 BC- Cassander dies

Not long after that, in 298 BC, Cassander died. He left the kingdom to his oldest son Philip. But, Philip died about four months later from the same sickness his father had. His two younger brothers: Antipater and Alexander, split the kingdom but still did not get along. Antipater killed their mother because she preferred Alexander (the younger one). In response, Alexander asked for help from both Pyrrhus and Demetrius. Pyrrhus arrived first. He established peace between Alexander and Antipater and was given land in exchange (as he had demanded), afterward he returned home. Then Demetrius arrived. Alexander told him that his help was no longer needed, but they secretly plotted against each other. Demetrius was successful and had Alexander killed. He then convinced the Macedonians that he would be a better king than Antipater. Antipater fled to his father-in-law Lysimachus who soon after had him killed. The kingdom of Cassander fell under the rule of Demetrius.

291 BC- Pyrrhus invades Thessaly

Demetrius began to build up his kingdom. He went down to Thebes and began besieging it (this was the style of fighting he liked). In 291 BC, Pyrrhus was bored because he didn't have anybody to fight so he decided to be a bit mischievous. He marched his army into Thessaly and ravaged some parts of it. This cut Demetrius off from his supplies, and without constant supplies, he couldn't carry out a siege. He postponed the siege then marched his army north to confront Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus wasn't actually looking for war so he took his army and returned to Epirus. When Demetrius saw this he returned and finished besieging Thebes.

289-288 BC- Demetrius invades Epirus

Pyrrhus and Demetrius' alliance has slowly been coming to an end with Pyrrhus' actions in Thessaly being the "icing on the cake." In 289, Demetrius marched to Epirus, the empire Pyrrhus ruled, and laid waste to it. Pyrrhus went to meet him in battle, but the two armies took different roads and never came in contact. Pyrrhus did, however, find Pantauchus who was one of Demetrius' generals. During the battle, Pantauchus and Pyrrhus fought hand to hand and wounded each other, but Pyrrhus ended up winning, and also won the battle. But even though he won, Demetrius was still invading his territory.

288-287 BC- Demetrius builds an army

After ravaging Epirus, Demetrius went back to Athens. He had begun to live in luxury and not treat the people nicely, so the people didn't really like him anymore. He then began to build up an enormous army and navy and this didn't help because they thought he was just using them to further his ambitions. But this began to worry the remaining three generals: Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy.

287 BC- Demetrius is defeated

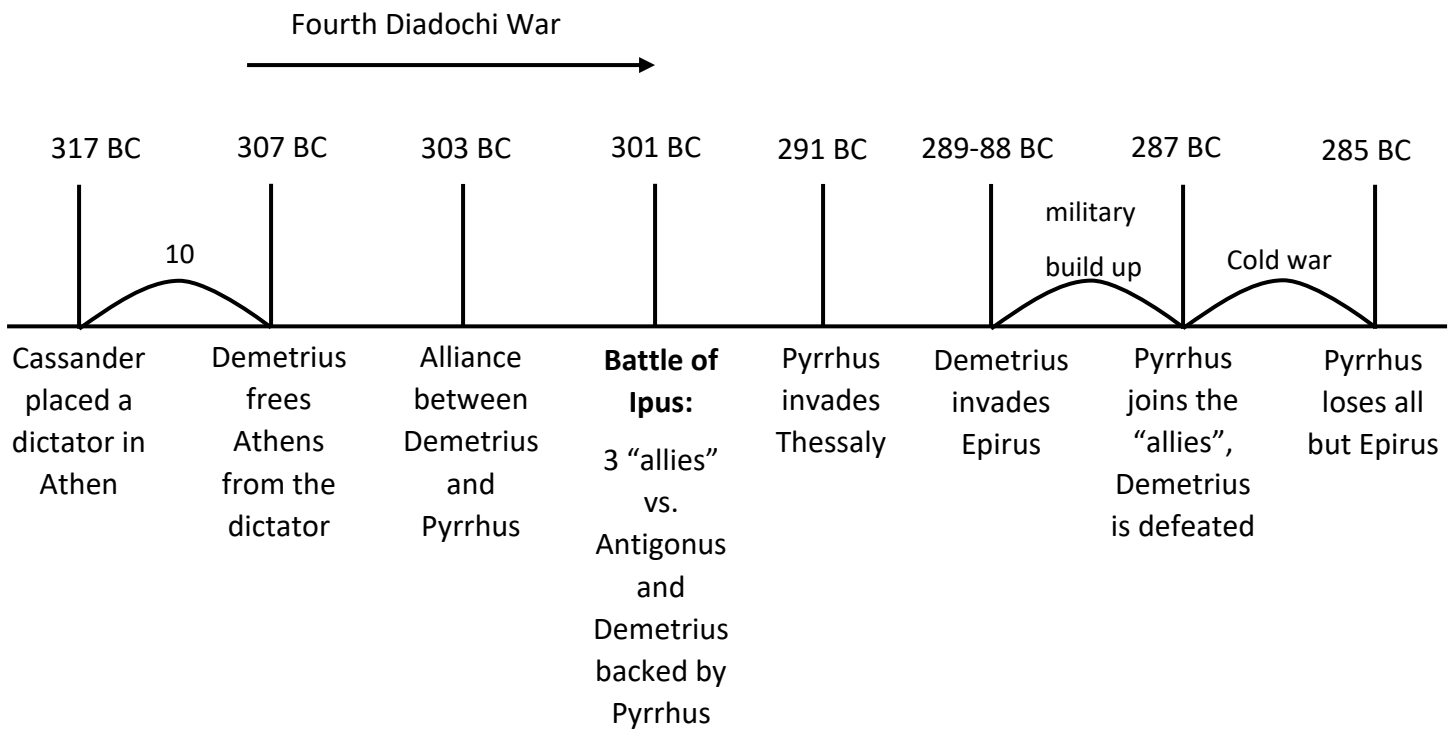
Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Seleucus realized that if they let Demetrius build back up and become as powerful as his father Antigonus had been, their lives and kingdoms would be at risk. They knew they had to do something- quick. They sent a request to Pyrrhus, asking him to break his alliance with Demetrius and join them. Pyrrhus knew that his alliance with Demetrius was barely holding up, and that Demetrius would break it anyhow once he was finished with his military buildup, so he agreed to break it first. In 287 BC, he went into alliance with Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Seleucus. He and Lysimachus, that same year, attacked Demetrius from the West and East, respectively. Demetrius' army hated him so they quickly and gladly defected to Pyrrhus. Demetrius escaped but was soon captured by Seleucus. He lived under house arrest for a few years until he died. After Demetrius was defeated, Lysimachus and Pyrrhus split up his land between themselves.

287-285 BC- Lysimachus wages a cold war on Pyrrhus

After Lysimachus and Pyrrhus defeated Demetrius, they split his land. Pyrrhus was given control of Macedonia, while Lysimachus took the rest of the land. A cold war began between the two generals because Lysimachus wasn't content with the territory he had gotten. Lysimachus led the Macedonians to slowly distrust Pyrrhus, teasing them for being commanded by an Epirot instead of a Macedonian.

285 BC- Lysimachus defeats Pyrrhus

The spies from Lysimachus succeeded in turning Pyrrhus' newly acquired army against him. The soldiers who had just recently turned from Demetrius to Pyrrhus went from Pyrrhus to Lysimachus. Only Pyrrhus' original soldiers stayed loyal to him. He lost all he had gained except Epirus; this was in 285 BC.



Pyrrhus in Italy – The Pyrrhic War

285 BC- Thurri appeals to Rome

In Italy, a nation was slowly rising in power. That nation was Rome. Rome had conquered the northern part of Italy, not through war but through treaties. In Southern Italy there were many still independent Greek cities. The most powerful of these was Tarentum. In 285 BC, a smaller city-Thurri was being battered by the Lucanians. Thurri appealed to Rome for help rather than its more powerful neighbor Tarentum, who was the premiere Greek city in Southern Italy.

282 BC- Rome declares war on Tarentum

In 282 BC, Thurri asked Rome for help once again. Thurri was still being attacked by the Lucanians and Brucians, so they again asked Rome for help instead of Tarentum. This time Rome came to help. Rome sailed into the bay of Tarentum and expelled the raiders, placing a Roman garrison in the city. However, in sailing in the bay of Tarentum, Rome had broken a treaty signed with Tarentum in which it was agreed that the bay was off limits for Rome. Tarentum reacted immediately. They destroyed Rome's ships, took prisoners, and also attacked Thurri. Rome sent Lucius Postumius Megellus to Tarentum in order to make a truce, but this offer was rejected. So when Postumius arrived back in Rome, they declared war on Tarentum.

280 BC- Pyrrhus arrives in Tarentum

At this point, Tarentum realized that they were no match for Rome. So, they decided to enlist the aid of another general: they asked for the help of Pyrrhus. He accepted their request in 280 BC and arrived the same year and immediately began to prepare the city for war.

280 BC- The battle of Heraclea

Pyrrhus thought he'd have some time to prepare but that same year Rome marched down to Tarentum. Pyrrhus went out to meet them, and the battle of Heraclea was fought. The turning point in that battle was when Pyrrhus unleashed his 20 war elephants he had brought with him- Rome had never seen elephants and they were terrified. Pyrrhus won the battle. Both sides then retreated for the winter and prepared to fight again.

279 BC- The battle of Asculum

The second battle in the Pyrrhic War was the battle of Asculum in 279 BC. Both Rome and Pyrrhus used the winter at the end of 279 BC and beginning of 280 BC to prepare for another battle. Once spring came, Pyrrhus invaded Apulia, a region in Italy. The Romans marched against him, and the two armies met near Asculum. This time, Rome brought 300 anti-elephant carts to defend themselves. According to wikipedia "the Romans devised special wagons... They were four-wheeled and had poles mounted transversely on upright beams. They could be swung in any direction. Some had iron tridents, spikes, or scythes, and some had 'cranes that hurled down heavy grappling irons'. Many poles protruded in front of the wagons and had fire-bearing grapnels wrapped in cloth daubed with pitch. The wagons carried bowmen, hurlers of stones, and slingers who

threw iron caltrops and men who threw grapnels on fire against the trunks and faces of the elephants.” Rome was prepared for the elephants, or so they thought. When the battle began, all it took was for Pyrrhus’ soldiers to attack the carts, and the Roman soldiers who were driving them quickly ran away. The battle lasted two days and Pyrrhus was the victor. Rome had lost 6,000 soldiers while Pyrrhus lost 3,500. However, Pyrrhus realized that since they were fighting in Italy, Rome could easily bring more troops - he on the other hand, could not. So Pyrrhus made an armistice with Rome, while he turned his attention to the island of Sicily. Sicily had asked for Pyrrhus’ help to fight Carthage who was warring against them. Pyrrhus was able to defeat all of Carthage’s strongholds in Sicily except one, so he decided to build a fleet of ships and invade the capital of Carthage in Africa. However, he was cruel to the Greek city states by forcing them to make his boats, so they rebelled, and ultimately Pyrrhus was forced to go back to Italy.

275 BC- The battle of Beneventum

Rome had been preparing for war all this time and in 275 BC, the final battle was fought. Because Pyrrhus had gone to Sicily, there was much less support for him in Italy. This battle is called the battle of Beneventum. There Pyrrhus was ultimately defeated due to his own war elephants. During the battle they turned around and charged through his ranks.

273 BC- Egypt sends Ambassadors to Rome

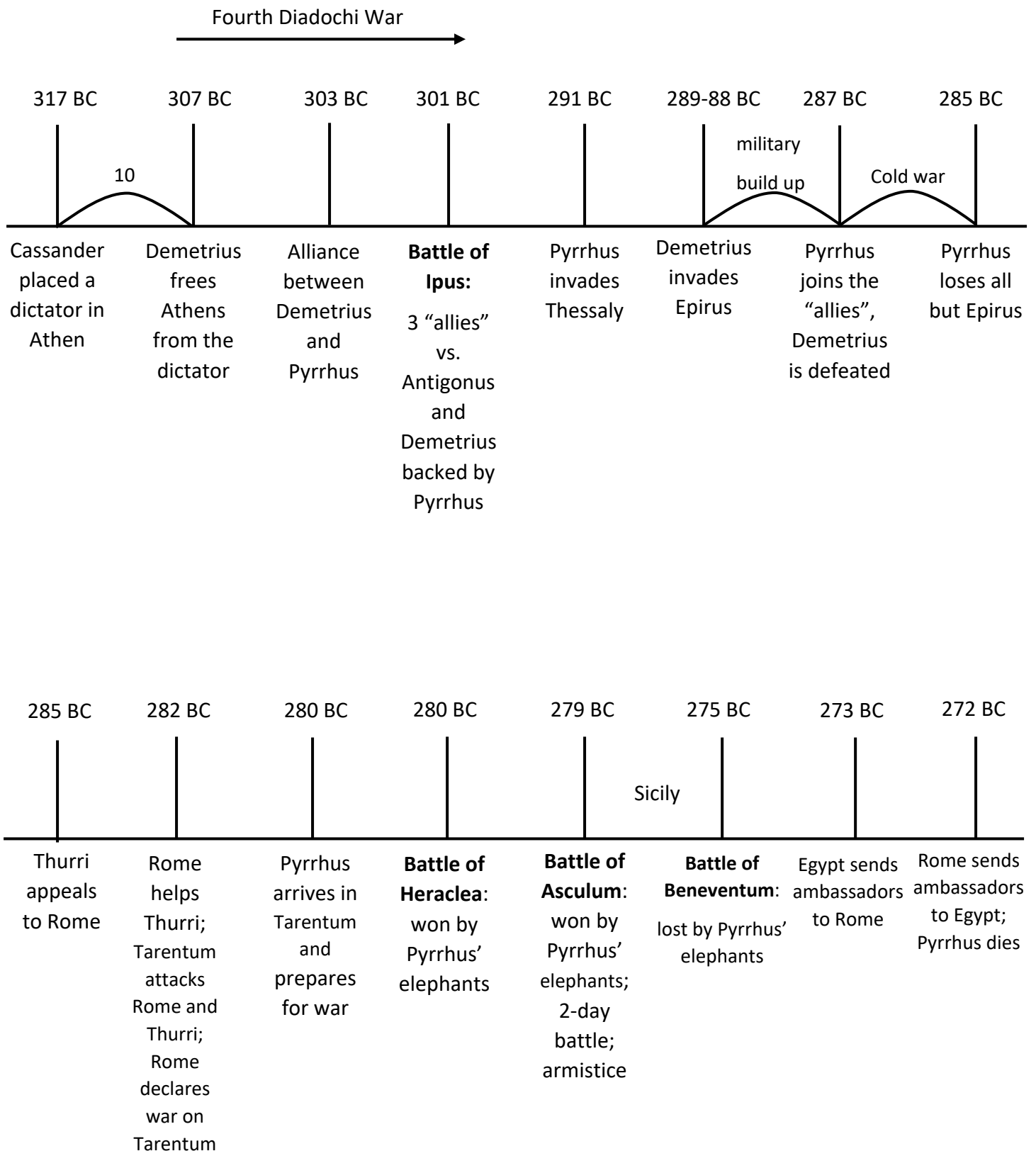
Pyrrhus was one of the greatest generals at this time, so when a new power defeated him, the world took notice. In 273 BC, the King of Egypt, Ptolemy II Philadelphus sent ambassadors to Rome to solicit their friendship.

272 BC- Rome sends Ambassadors to Egypt

In 272 BC, Rome and Egypt made a stronger alliance and Pyrrhus fought his last battle. After Egypt had sent ambassadors to Rome, in 272 BC Rome sent ambassadors back to Ptolemy Philadelphus. This strengthened their alliance. During this time, Pyrrhus was helping a spartan Cleonymus take control of Sparta. However, he encountered too much resistance, and his oldest son Ptolemy was killed. Pyrrhus didn’t take time to grieve, but instead went to settle a fight in Argos. He ended up fighting in the narrow streets of a city where his elephants blocked the only exit. During the battle, Pyrrhus was on a horse fighting a soldier. Apparently, the soldier’s mother, who was watching the battle from a building window, threw a tile and knocked Pyrrhus unconscious. We don’t know if the tile killed him instantly, but what we do know is that the soldier cut Pyrrhus’ head off - bringing Pyrrhus’ time as a ruler to an end.

285 BC	282 BC	280 BC	280 BC	279 BC	275 BC	273 BC	272 BC
					Sicily		
Thurri appeals to Rome	Rome helps Thurri; Tarentum attacks Rome and Thurri; Rome declares war on Tarentum	Pyrrhus arrives in Tarentum and prepares for war	Battle of Heraclea: won by Pyrrhus' elephants	Battle of Asculum: won by Pyrrhus' elephants; 2-day battle; armistice	Battle of Beneventum: lost by Pyrrhus' elephants	Egypt sends ambassadors to Rome	Rome sends ambassadors to Egypt; Pyrrhus dies

In summary:



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