

OLYMPISM IN THE HISTORY OF PHYSICAL CULTURE IN UKRAINE

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Abstracts

The Relevance of the Research. Ever since ancient times, Physical Education (PE) has been undergoing a process of formation, development, and enhancement in the territory occupied by modern Ukraine, and now it has become an integral part of ethnic culture. In current *Research Papers*, the historical aspects of PE and the contemporary applications of the physical culture traditions have been researched. However, the atmosphere of Olympism which has been present during the various historical periods of the physical culture development in Ukraine has never been the subject of specifically-focused study. **Objective of the Research:** To reveal the essence of Olympism in the history of PE in the territory of modern Ukraine. **The Research Methods:** analysis and generalization of scientific and ethnographic literature, induction and deduction, historical and logical methods, method of extrapolation. **The Research Results.** PE, in general, followed the tradition of ancient Greece and took place in gymnasia and palaestra, under the supervision of specially trained personnel. The program of the competition was quite broad and included pentathlon, pugilism, horseback riding, archery, swimming, dancing, and outdoor games, among others. Pentathlon consisted of wrestling, running, jumping, javelin throw, and discus throw. Extensive development of PE and sport in the Northern Seaside of the Black Sea led to close relationships with other sports policies in the Greek world. Athletes participated in the most prestigious competitions in Greece. Victory was considered the highest achievement and brought fame and universal respect for fellow citizens. **Conclusions.** The tradition of Olympism in the history of PE in Ukraine reached the northern Black Sea area from the 7th century BC to the 2nd century AD. Over time, it created a unique PE system, based on national ideals of physical perfection, on the domestic and traditional ceremonies and customs of Olympism.

Key words: Olympism, PE, physical culture, sports, history, traditions, the Northern seaside of the Black Sea.

Анатолій Цось, Ніна Деделюк. Олімпізм в історії фізичної культури України. Актуальність. На території України фізичне виховання з найдавніших часів переживало процес становлення, розвитку та вдосконалення, а нині стало важливою частиною етнічної культури. У сучасних наукових працях досліджуються історичні аспекти фізичного виховання та сучасне застосування традицій фізичної культури. Проте атмосфера олімпізму, яка панувала протягом різних історичних періодів розвитку фізичної культури в Україні, ніколи не була предметом цілеспрямованого дослідження. **Мета дослідження** – висвітлити сутність олімпізму в історії фізичної культури на території України. **Методи дослідження** – аналіз й узагальнення наукової та етнографічної літератури, індукція й дедукція, історичний та логічний методи, метод екстраполяції. **Результати дослідження.** Фізичне виховання, зазвичай, розвивалося за традиціями Стародавньої Греції та відбувалося в гімназіях і палестрах під наглядом спеціально навченого персоналу. Програма змагань була досить широкою й включала п'ятиборство, кулачний спорт, верхову їзду, стрільбу з лука, плавання, танці, рухливі ігри та ін. Пятиборство складалося з боротьби, бігу, стрибків, метання списа й диска. Широкий розвиток фізичного виховання та спорту в Північному Причорномор'ї привів до тісних зв'язків з іншими видами спорту в грецькому світі. Спортсмени брали участь у найпрестижніших змаганнях Греції. Перемога в спорті вважалася найвищим досягненням і приносила славу й загальну повагу співгромадян. **Висновки.** Традиція олімпізму в історії фізичної культури України досягла Північного Причорномор'я з VII ст. до н. е. до II ст. н. е. Із часом була створена унікальна система фізичного виховання, заснована на народних ідеалах фізичного вдосконалення, на системі побутових і традиційних обрядів та традиціях олімпізму.

Ключові слова: олімпізм, фізична культура, спорт, історія, традиції, Північне Причорномор'я.

Introduction. Physical culture occupies an important position among the various areas of human activity and the aim of it is the individual physical improvement. In the process of its development throughout history, specific spiritual and material values relating to physical culture have been established. They have been reflected in a general accumulation of knowledge about the man's physical nature; however, they also have a link with such aspects as the publication of scientific and technical literature, the construction of sports facilities, and the manufacturing of sports equipment. The combination of material and spiritual values constitute the traditions of physical culture, which in turn are an integral part of national culture and perform important social functions. For example, in ancient Greece, the Olympic Games were considered to be sacred.

They became real national holidays and significantly influenced the course of the entire Hellenic civilization. Likewise, it is impossible to imagine what the lives of the Chinese and Japanese would be like without the martial arts, in which philosophy, morality, and physical perfection have been combined.

Ever since ancient times, physical education has been undergoing a process of formation, development, and enhancement in the territory currently occupied by modern Ukraine, and now it has become an important part of ethnic culture. In present-day scientific works, the historical aspects of physical education [2; 3; 4; 6; 8] and the contemporary applications of the physical culture traditions [7; 9; 10; 11] have been studied. However, the atmosphere of Olympism which has been present during the various historical periods of the physical culture development in Ukraine has never been the subject of specifically-focused study.

Objective. To reveal the essence of Olympism in the history of physical culture in the territory of modern Ukraine.

Research Methods – analysis and generalization of scientific and ethnographic literature, induction and deduction, historical and logical methods, method of extrapolation.

The Research Results. Modern Ukraine occupies a worthy place in the international Olympic movement, promoting the democratization of social life, and the spiritual and physical development of its citizens.

As stated in the International Olympic Charter, Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will, and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the enjoyment of exertion, the educational value of a good example, an awareness of social responsibility, and a respect for fundamental and universal ethical principles.

A bright page in Ukraine's early history was the thousand-year duration of an ancient civilization on the north coast of the Black Sea, the result of wide-ranging Greek settlement around the Mediterranean at the end of the seventh century BC. During the period of the north Black Sea states' existence, they achieved significant progress in the sphere of material production, urban development, culture, and art, and left their mark on future generations in Ukraine. Among the most developed city-states were Olbia (near modern Mykolaiv), Chersonesus (modern Sevastopol), Thira (Belgorod-Dniester), Pantikapaion (Kerch), and Phanagoria (near the modern village of Scene on the Taman Peninsula) Gorgippiya (modern Anapa).

The enormous popularity of sports and various types of competitions was primarily the result of the mythological worldview of people: sports games, exercises, and competitions had been created by the ancient gods and heroes and were held in their honor during religious holidays. It was believed that physical exercise was a duty for all citizens.

Ancient Greek mythology achieved its highest level of development in the second millennium BC when the Olympian pantheon of gods was ultimately formed. The principal indicator of the development of mythology was the elevation of the competitive spirit and the maximizing of superhuman strength to achieve some particular goal or accomplish a specific feat.

The various competitive events referred to as agons constituted one avenue for honoring the gods, and they attracted a large number of participants who wanted to demonstrate their prowess in some particular kind of sport [3; 4; 9]. Thus, the atmosphere of intense competition, competition, and confrontation stemmed from the myths.

Hermes and Hercules were considered to be the patrons of athletes and sporting events (and in Olbia, it was Achilles). In honor of these gods, vocational hymns were formulated and engraved in marble, and plaques were mounted in athletic facilities or their vicinity. In the gymnasiums and palaestras, there were also herms – poles bearing a sculpture of Hermes.

On one of the marble fragments discovered in Chersonesos is a hymn in honor of Hermes, written by a local poet in the second century. Upon the order of gymnasiarch Demotela, son of Theophilus [2; 11]:

“.. Herald immortal and lord of the earth ...

Because he holds the keys to life,

Demotel, son of the gymnasiarch Theophilus,

has exalted him in memory of his victories.

Send (o Hermes!) your special flavor to this city”.

A second and equally important reason for the development of physical education was the demand for healthy, strong, and hardened warriors. Above all, the one who won the victory was the one who had the greatest physical strength. “The main thing is undeniably the fact that by dint of physical exercise the body becomes harder and stronger”, the Greek philosopher and public figure Solon said to Anacharsis the Scythian in the dialogue of the eleventh-century Greek writer Lucian. “Another result, no less important, is that youths acquire skills and if necessary use them in battle. In hand-to-hand combat, a trained warrior will be able to

triumph more quickly. Thus we prepare youths for important tests of this kind, in other words for war...". The constant training and the trials were viewed as the most necessary and mandatory conditions for the upbringing of citizens in the ancient state.

The third reason for the extensive development of physical education and sports on the north coast of the Black Sea lay in the existence of the cult of the attractive, physically perfect, and harmonious person. In the representations of the ancient Greeks, the Olympic gods were physically and morally perfect athletes. Apollo was a mighty boxer and an unsurpassed archer; Hermes was a very fast runner, and the Dioskouri brothers Castor and Pollux were skilled riders. For this reason, people yearned to be like their gods, and that could only be achieved through physical exercise.

In the course of the excavations at Chersonessus archaeologists have found the works of Greek masters which embodied the created ideal of an individual. Athletes are very frequently depicted in these works [3; 4; 11].

Military science in the Bosporan Kingdom underwent a degree of Sarmatian influence which manifested itself in the usage of Sarmatian tactics and weaponry. Each year, on the north coast of Pontus in Olvia and Chersonessus, there were military competitions that were associated with the passage of young men to the status of citizens.

According to the Greek scholar and traveler Levsaniy of the second century B.C., settlements aspiring to be elevated to the status of a city had to have a gymnasium or a theatre. The boys from six to twelve years of age did physical exercises and played games in palaestra (from Greek "pale" – fight), as well as studying music, poetry, reading, and writing. Later the boys from fourteen to sixteen entered gymnasia (from gymnos meaning naked: Greek athletes were naked while training and fighting), where they wrestled, jumped, and threw the discus and the javelin. It is known from literary sources that there were gymnasia in Olvia, Chersonessus, Panticapaeum, Phanagoria, and Tanais. Large cities had also a few palaestas and gymnasia [6; 7].

Every year on the holiday dedicated to the god Hermes, pupils in gymnasia took an exam in gymnastics. They believed that a patron god was always present at exams and helped deserving pupils. For that reason, they pledged with an oath to the gods to serve their country.

Following tradition and preparing soldiers with a high degree of physical excellence, the ancient Black Sea state made contributions to the development of physical training and sports among its citizens, particularly the young people. All sectors of the public participated in sports competitions, including those even of the highest rank—the magistrates. There were also such types of competitions as the pentathlon, boxing, archery, equestrianism, running, and swimming.

The pentathlon was among the favorite sporting events for Greek athletes, because it demanded all-around physical development involving wrestling, running, jumping, and discus- and javelin-throwing. The winner was the man who came in first in the first three events, not the athlete who got the highest score, as happens nowadays. In this kind of competition the number 5 had a special meaning. It signified the number of separate activities involved in the pentathlon, the number of attempts permitted in the discus and javelin throwing events, and the total running distance (5 laps) [2; 4].

Ritual and martial dances were very widespread because most of the cities were situated on the Black Sea coast. The great importance attached to swimming for human development is attested to by a well-known ancient saying about an ignorant man: "He can neither read nor swim". It was not obligatory to win in all the different types of competitive events: winning one event was sufficient.

One type of competitive event which was obligatory was that of running, which was divided based on distance categories: the sprint (177,6 m), the double (consisting of two stages), and the long-distance event, consisting of 6 to 24 stages. At the place where the competitions have held the distance was marked in stages, and the place was called a stadium. The starting line and the finish line were marked by stone columns, or else a line was just drawn on the ground. The starting line was placed at a higher altitude. The signal to start was a shout from a judge or a trumpet blast. No more than four athletes could start at one time. In keeping with Olympic tradition, the runners were naked. To fall out of the race or not reach the finish line was considered to be a great shame. The first person to reach finish the course was the winner [1; 3; 4].

The long jump was sometimes performed from a run, but most often from a small stone elevation into a narrow pit filled with sea sand that was from 15 to 25 meters in length. Before jumping, the athletes gripped special weights (like stone or metal dumbbells) known as halteres and swung their arms forward to give their bodies more momentum during the jump. Sometimes the athletes released the halteres during their jump. Halteres weighing between 1,5 and 4,5 kilograms have been found.

Athletic wrestling occupied a special place in the everyday lives of people of the Black Sea northern coastal area. Wrestlers competed on special sports grounds that had been plowed and covered with sand. There

was no division into separate weight classes. There was no restriction on the duration of the fight—contestants continued struggling until one of them had completely defeated the other (they had to throw their opponent to the ground three times). Lots were drawn to determine the division of combatants into pairs. They fought according to their turn, using a variety of methods, including guile and even deceit. They could grab their opponent by the arms and throw him over their head, or seize his foot suddenly and throw him to the ground with a jerk. They were allowed to knock their opponent down by tripping him and to use a headlock or neck lock, but punching with the fist was not allowed [4; 11].

Boxing was highly esteemed by the people of the northern Black Sea area. As was the case in wrestling, boxers were divided into pairs by lot; there were no restrictions on the size of the boxing ring. The usual pattern was to punch the opponent in the head. Fighters' hands were bound with leather straps to protect them, and they also wore belts to strengthen the punch. They wore bronze caps and special headbands to protect their heads and ears. The key lay in avoiding injuries and wearing down their opponent completely with the use of powerful punches.

Discus- and javelin-throwing were termed aristocratic sports; they were even popular with generals and magistrates. Some reminiscences about participation in those competitions were found in Olvia and on the island of Berezan, in third-century Berezan legends, in particular regarding the participation of Achilles' son Leonidas, who was a champion in javelin throwing. Javelin throwing was directed toward a target (usually a warrior's shield), which was at a great distance. Javelins or darts were thrown on the run, to the accompaniment of flutes [4; 6; 7].

To improve the speed and accuracy of the javelin's trajectory, they attached a leather belt with a loop to the shaft. The results were measured in the lengths of a man's foot.

The discus also had a military function. When cities were under siege it was used as a kind of letter; details such as the terms of surrender were written on it, and then it was thrown over the walls into enemy hands. The weight of the ancient discus, based on the age group, ranged from 3 to 7 kilograms (as compared with two kilograms for a modern discus). They were made of stone, bronze, iron, or even tin. The surface was rubbed with sand so that it would be smooth, and yet not slippery to grip. The diameter of the discus ranged from 13 to 33 centimeters, and the thickness averaged 14 millimeters. Two different criteria were regarded in connection with discus-throwing – the height and the distance of the throw. The winner was the contestant that fighter whose discus was the last to fall to the ground (due to the height of the throw) or the one which traveled the furthest (in distance).

The discus was thrown from a special zone. It was placed on the right wrist and forearm, held lightly with the left hand. Leaning backward and to his right, the athlete made some accelerative movements and then threw the object. At the moment of making the throw, he was not permitted to step beyond the starting line. In competitions, athletes took turns throwing the same discus.

In the Chersonesus chronicle, there is a list of winners in an event involving throwing a ball with a loop or throwing a lasso. That sport was called *ankilomakhiya*. The term “*ankilomakhiya*” was of local rather than Greek origin. In the opinion of researchers, the *ankilomakhiya* was a kind of sport that consisted of throwing the ball with a loop. The device was first made of wood and later of metal, somewhat reminiscent of the hammer that exists in modern athletics. In the “*Agonistic catalog*” of Gorgippia another unusual sport, *'evksiya'* was mentioned, presumably a type of gymnastics. The catalog gives the names of 57 champions [3; 4; 5].

The living conditions of the population of the northern Black Sea littoral led to the emergence of competitions that were peculiar to the Greeks. A particular case was that of archery, which they borrowed from the Scythians [2; 4; 9]. Based on a fourth-century Olvian manuscript, it is known that “Anaxagoras, the son of Demogoras shot an arrow 282 orgy (521,7 m). That is an astonishing feat, considering that contemporary archery contestants achieve distances of 100–150 meters, and the record of the famous medieval archer Murad-Gazis was about 360 meters.

Among the objects which have been discovered, and which were once used in adult games, are dice in the form of cubes, hexagons, and polygons which had a value from 1 to 6. They were made of bones, stones, or clay (sometimes Egyptian glass). Games played in combination with draughts were well known, and placed on specially painted panels [4; 9].

In every city, celebrations were held in honor of different gods, and in almost all of them, this was accompanied by sporting events. Certain celebrations and the “sacred” games connected with them gradually became national events. Almost all the major sports holidays and competitions in the northern Black Sea littoral, as well as in Greece, had myths that were connected with a particular god in whose honor the agons were held. In their content, they resembled the celebrations held in Greece. Like the Olympians, the Pythians,

and others, they represented a part in a folk celebration that lasted for several days. The games were opened with solemn sacrifices. At altars and in temples, pagan priests accepted presents in honor of the immortal lords of the city, among whom was the Virgin. In the central square heralds read out messages of commendation, and officials presented awards to honored citizens. Orators, philosophers, and scientists also took the floor there.

At Dionysia, there were great celebrations dedicated to Dionysus, the god of wine and viticulture. In the third century A.D., a scientist by the name of Siriscus read his work on the history of the Chersonesus in public. His work was rated as being the best one. The people and the Council decided to reward Siriscus with a golden wreath and to set up an honorary decree, carved in marble, in the temple of the goddess Virgin. In the theatre (the ruins of which are open in the center of the city) poets, trumpeters, heralds, and singers of cheerful songs of praise in their art all competed with one another. Naturally, in the overcrowded stadiums, the spectators welcomed their favorite gymnasts, encouraging the strong and mocking the weak with their shouts [1; 2; 4; 9].

The celebrations in honor of Achilles at Tendra spit were also well-known [3; 4]. They were systematic and were accompanied by a long sports competition program. Their organizer was considered to be Achilles himself. Interestingly enough, Herodotus recalls an ancient name for Tendra spit – Achilles Dromeus. Translated from Ancient Greek, it means “Achilles' run” or “Achilles' stadium”.

In the games dedicated to Achilles, in addition to the Olvians, athletes from other countries participated, including the Mediterranean Greeks. During the 1903 excavations of the temple of Apollo Delphian, not far from Miletus, a city on the north coast of the Mediterranean, an inscription was found that told about the provisions of an agreement between Olvia and Miletus. Mentioned among the privileges the Miletians received in Olvia was the right to take part in Olvian competitions, which was evidence of their high status.

Based on a Council decision the most important sports games were marked by a special release of coins dedicated to the occasion, which provides evidence regarding the national importance that the athletes' wrestling held in Chersonesus.

It is important to emphasize that the high level of development of physical education and sport in the northern Black Sea littoral allowed the colonists to participate in the Greek games.

Long before the beginning of the solemn games, specially chosen sacred heralds traveled all over Greece, providing information about the date of the celebration and inviting people to participate in the celebrations and competitions. They also traveled to Pontus (the name given to the northern Black Sea littoral by the Greeks). One inscription found in the Greek city of Delphi, where the Pythian Games had previously been held, tells about the departure of ambassadors from Delphi to Chersonesus in the second century B. C. to give notification about the games which would be held. The inhabitants of Chersonesus cheerfully greeted the ambassadors from Delphi, exempted them from various expenses, and took special care of them. To participate in the celebrations, ambassadors from Chersonesus were sent to Delphi. They sacrificed animals to the patron gods of the games – Apollo and Athene – and according to the inscription, “spent their stay with dignity”. The grateful inhabitants of Delphi decided “to express the praise of the inhabitants of Pontus and their sincere treatment of their god and the city of Delphi” [3; 4; 6; 9].

Delphi provided ambassadors with the civil rights of Chersonesus and in their honor. Resolutions were carved on marble plaques. This resolution does not say who accompanied the ambassadors of the Chersonesus athletes to participate in the Pythian games. However, numerous inscriptions found during the excavations of ancient cities show the active part taken by the northern Black Sea Greeks and the victories which they achieved in various competitions that were held in Greece itself.

The games ended with the presentation of awards to the winners. A prize that was often bestowed was a vessel full of oil from the sacred olive tree. A bronze vase with a small but famous inscription was found in a tomb in Chersonese, and it was a reward. At the end of the fourth century BC, a large Athenian festival was held in honor of the Dioscuri resident of Chersonese who was the first among the strong, brave, and agile [3; 4; 7].

On a marble slab found in Kherson in 1903 (IRE, and №434), the top sporting events that were held at the stadium are listed: running in one stage, double-running, long-distance running, wrestling and boxing. The first two competitions were won by Diocles, and in long-distance running it was Antilochus; Kritoboulos and Theodosius won the wrestling competition, and in boxing, including participants in other types of events, it was Kritoboulos and Antilochus. Famous poems in honor of the winner of the main event appear below. In works of art from the second and third centuries, images of Chersonese gladiators can be seen. Competitions of gladiators can be seen on many clay lamps on the marble frieze. It is believed that in those times the theatre of Chersonesus was used for gladiatorial combats. New features appeared in the life, culture, and political system of Chersonesus; this was also shown in their attitude to fitness. The sport was no longer held in high honor by

all free citizens. Under those circumstances, it became possible for gladiatorial games to be held that were utterly unlike the solemn and festive competitions of Chersonesus athletes during the city's first 600 years [5; 9].

In the second century, athletic games were organized in the northern Black Sea region, with inscriptions on marble slabs recording the names of the winners, but after the third century, there are no surviving monuments dedicated to the sport. In the fifth and sixth centuries, feudal social relationships formed; another way of life took shape involving different customs, and a new religion, Christianity, came on the scene. In 394, Emperor Theodosius banned the famous Olympic Games. In this way, large-scale public sports competitions in the northern Black Sea gradually ceased to be held, or else they changed in nature, depending on social and economic factors. Features of ancient culture can be traced to the culture of the Slavs and the Kievan Rus.

In 1037 under Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise the construction of the St. Sophia Cathedral began, and not only the wealth of ancient architecture has survived to the present, but also the pictorial decoration of the eleventh century. At present, 260 square meters of mosaics and about three thousand square meters of fresco paintings have been preserved, including a great variety of hunting scenes and images of acrobats, musicians, dancers, wrestlers, and riders, among others. A significant track The "Hippodrome" in the south turret of the cathedral occupies a place of significance. It depicts four-horse teams that are ready for the competition to begin, as well as managers announcing the start of the race, and then moving chariots and loges on the racetrack [3; 4; 5; 8; 10].

Having a gifted, strong, and happy personality became the ideal of general and physical education, particularly in Ancient Rus. An energetic and enterprising character captured the attention of the public. Thus an aesthetic ideal endowed with the supernatural physical and spiritual abilities of the legendary hero emerges. He enters the combat on behalf of his people and wins the victory. First and foremost, these heroes were endowed with a superior level of physical development, preparedness, and moral spirit. Because of this, we can state that in the period of ancient Slavdom a unique system of physical education was created, which was based on national ideals of physical perfection, on a system of domestic and traditional ceremonies, and on the Olympic traditions of the northern greater Black Sea area, which has been enriched and augmented by the contributions of subsequent generations up to the present day.

Conclusions. The tradition of Olympism in the history of physical culture in Ukraine extends back to the northern Black Sea littoral. Because of the wide-ranging settlement of Greeks in the Mediterranean basin, city-states were formed in which the population attached great importance to physical education and sport. This can be accounted for by the mythological mindset of the population, their need for healthy and hardy soldiers, and, of course, by the cult of the beautiful, physically perfect, and harmonious person.

The system of physical training on the Black Sea coast in a general sense followed the traditions of ancient Greece. The physical education of children and young people took place in the gymnasia and palaestra, under the supervision of specially trained personnel (gymnasiarchs). The program of the competition was quite broad and included pentathlon, boxing, horseback riding, archery, swimming, dancing, and outdoor games, among others. The pentathlon consisted of wrestling, running, jumping, javelin, and discus throwing.

The extensive development of physical education and sport in the northern Black Sea area led to close relationships with other sports policies in the Greek world. Athletes participated in the most prestigious competitions in Greece. Winning in sports was considered to be the highest form of achievement, and earned fame and universal respect on the part of fellow citizens. Over time, a unique system of physical education was created, based on national ideals of physical perfection, the system of domestic and traditional ceremonies, and the traditions of Olympism.

Summary. The tradition of Olympism in the history of physical culture in Ukraine reached the northern Black Sea area from the seventh century BC to the second century AD. Physical education, in general, followed the tradition of ancient Greece and took place in gymnasia and palaestra, under the supervision of specially trained personnel. The program of the competition was quite broad and included pentathlon, pugilism, horseback riding, archery, swimming, dancing, and outdoor games, among others. Pentathlon consisted of wrestling, running, jumping, javelin, and discus throwing.

Extensive development of physical education and sport in the Northern Black Sea area led to close relationships with other sports policies in the Greek world. Athletes participated in the most prestigious competitions in Greece. Winning in sports was considered the highest achievement and brought fame and universal respect for fellow citizens. Over time, it created a unique system of physical education, based on national ideals of physical perfection, on the system of domestic and traditional ceremonies and traditions of Olympism.

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