



THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY

OF MALTA

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THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF MALTA

MAGAZINE

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Valletta,

Malta G.C.

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NEW COMMITTEE ELECTED

The following gentlemen have been elected to form the Committee for the year 1969:—

- President** — Louis Frank
- Secretary** — Dr. Albert Ganado B.A., L.L.D.
- Treasurer** — Cecil Busuttill
- Members** — Magistrate Jos. Soler B.A., L.L.D.
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Paul A. Pace
Godwin Said
R.J. Walley
- Editor** — Dr. E. Auilina M.D., B.Sc.
- A/Editors** — R.J. Walley and Paul Pace

MALTESE POSTAL HISTORY

On the 19th Feb. 1969, a formal Memorandum Agreement appointing the Postmaster General sole distributor of all United Nations stamps and postal stationery was signed at the Exhibition Hall of the National Museum in Kingsway.

The local side was represented by the Hon. Dr. J. Spiteri Minister of Posts and Telephones, and Mr. J. Buttigieg the newly elected Postmaster; on the International side was Mr. G. Yates, Representative of the U.N. Development Programme, both bodies signing the Agreement.

This means that Malta joins other countries throughout the world, where United Nations stamps can be purchased in local currency. In the case of Malta, such stamps can be obtained from the Philatelic Bureau at the General Post Office at face value (for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the conversion rate, 1 cent is the equivalent of 1d).

The only marring note, however, is the incapability of supplying early issues to complete the collection of the newly-fledged United Nations enthusiast. In connection with this, we have to point out that the Malta Authorities are certainly not to blame, as the missing issues are unobtainable from the U.N. Headquarters itself.

Advantage was taken of the opportunity offered by the premises in the museum, to exhibit a number of interesting stamp varieties which represent the dream of the keen philatelist.

Among these was an imperforate sheet of the 6d Doctors Congress set, another of the 3d Historic without the word 'Malta', and a similar invisible 'Malta' on the 2d Human Rights.

The Exhibition lasted for four days, and was very well attended. Many were those who were captured by the beauty of the U.N. stamps and started a collection in this direction.

If similar Philatelic Exhibitions were to be held in the future, it is more than certain that the enthusiastic fire of this hobby will be kindled as it deserves.

THE MONTHLY MEETING OF DECEMBER

This took place as usual on the first Monday of the month. Miss Daisy Formosa exhibited a very interesting collection of Vatican stamps and corresponding Covers.

For a better understanding of the subject, and to appreciate fully the exhibits, she read a short note which we are reproducing in toto:—

"The Vatican Stamps you are going to see this evening, date back to August 1st, 1929 when the Lateran Pacts signed on Feb. 11 of the same year by the representatives of the Holy See and Italy became effective.

According to this agreement, Italy helped the Vatican to establish a postal service.

Ruling Pontiffs since 1929 were:

Pius XI — Achille Ratti 1939 to 1958.

Pius XII — Eugenio Pacelli 1939 to 1958.

John XXIII — Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli 1958 to 1963.

Paul VI — Giovanni Battista Montini the reigning Pontiff.

The first regular stamp issue is known as the 'Conciliation Set'.

In 1933 another regular set known as 'Gardens and Medallions' was issued, but later on in 1934 the first six stamps of the first set were overprinted owing to new values in accordance with the postal rates in Italy. This is known as the 'Provisional Set'. It was then proposed to surcharge the remainder of the set, but this proposal was not accepted. Sets were continually being issued and as in all other stamps, varieties exist very frequently.

Two miniature sheets in 1952 and in 1958 in connection with the 'Centenary of the First Stamp of Pontifical State' and the 'Brussels International Exhibition' were put into circulation.

Air mail Stamps first came out in 1938, and met with great success. Since then various sets with many high values were released, some of which not only rose to exorbitant prices, but are also very hard to obtain; to mention some examples 'The 75th Anniversary of the U.P.U.' and 'The Archangel Raphael' Sets.

Stamps for 'Special Delivery' (Express) were out in 1928 but these are very few, so much so that during the period 1929-68 only eight sets of 2 each were issued. Then in 1931, stamps of 1929 were overprinted 'Per Pacchi'. No new sets have been out since then. Four Postage Due sets were out between 1931 and 1968. The last was out in May 1968.

Other sets known as the "Interregnum Issue" have been printed for use between the death of a Pope and the election of the next. After the death of Pius XI, no special stamps were printed, but the existing series was overprinted 'Sede Vacante' and put into circulation. After the death of Pius XII and

John XXIII, new stamps bearing the 'Coat-of-Arms' of the Holy See were purposely printed.

I must now come to an end and invite you all even those ladies and gentlemen who are not very enthusiastic about the Vatican Collection, to visit the exhibition."

THE POSTMARKS THE THING

This article was written and read before the Sydney Philatelic Club, by the late J.O. Critchlow.

During the comparatively short time I have been a collector of stamps I have been surprised to find so many other collectors who disdain the cancelled stamp; they say the beauty of the stamp is marred by the postmark and are quite satisfied to show page after page of unblemished examples of the art of engraver, lithographer and printer. I do not condemn my friends who hold to this opinion; on the contrary, I feel sorry they are unwittingly shutting themselves off from unsuspected pleasures that would lead them into many interesting by-paths of which they know nothing at present.

Granted, if one is compiling a collection solely for its pecuniary value, that mint stamps to be a better investment; but I have long been an advocate of collecting for the pleasure of collecting (although there is no reason why we should not put a few "promising" items away in a stockbook as an investment); therefore you must not expect me to recommend the type of collection that is esteemed merely for its value in pounds, shillings and pence.

Nor do I disparage the collection of mint stamps for inclusion in thematic collections; in fact, I agree that mint stamps are to be preferred to those with cancellations in subject collections comprising ships, waterfalls, bridges and the like. I do feel however, that every collector should explore his or her own philatelic by-paths, and these should certainly include the collection and study of used stamps and their cancellations.

There are few countries where the collector will not find it possible by developing an interest in postal cancellations and markings, to extend his collection from a disjointed series into an absorbing study unfolding, step by step, the course of the history of the particular country. In my own field, for example, the rather "dry-as-dust" history of Austria-Hungary at the zenith of its power, its disintegration after World War I, and the absorption of so many of the former Austrian and Hungarian minorities into new nations, can be vividly illustrated by the first issues of Austria and Hungary postmarked in towns and cities now in Czechoslovakia, Poland or Yugoslavia. Mint stamps have no such story to tell.

Quite recently I discovered from a translation of the official Soviet Catalogue that the common "arms" type stamps of Imperial Russia in use from 1907

to 1917 had been re-issued in April 1922, because of a shortage of the republican stamps introduced by the first Soviet Administration. Checking through my accumulation of these stamps I found several covers, blocks and singles with clear postmarks indicating their use during April 1922 and for some months afterwards. It is only by the dated postmarks that these stamps can be properly classified. Those ardent collectors of Commonwealth "penny reds" will know the value of dated copies in the determination of the various colours and shades.

For the collectors of practically every country there is much interest and pleasure to be derived from the chase after "used abroads" travelling post offices, and other types of cancellations. Generally, it is only by the postmark that the special service performed by the stamp can be identified. There are quite a few collectors of these items known to me, and no doubt there are many others I do not know. These collectors employ a peculiar technique which for want of a better term, I shall describe as "guileless stealth". They haunt the dealers premises seeking old collections to browse through. From long experience they are able to read postmarks quickly, no matter if the stamp be up-side down.

It follows that they often secure gems for their collections; but rarely do they lose their look of bland innocence during the course of the transaction, and their inscrutable countenances would ensure them quite lucrative incomes as poker players. These collectors are merely obtaining a legitimate reward for their industry and patience in acquiring the knowledge they possess, and it is open to all of us, by the exercise of a little diligence, to acquire similar knowledge in our fields of collecting.

The collecting of British stamps used abroad, for example, is not one of my own pursuits, but I do confess that I have been thrilled when one of my friends, browsing through an old collection in a dealers shop has found a penny stamp cancelled "BOI" evidence of its use at "Alexandria" or a A 25 used in Malta, or even a C30 used at Valparaise, on a page of otherwise uninteresting stamps. The acquisition of one such item, usually for a moderate outlay, brings considerably more pleasure than the purchase of an expensive long set of mint stamps which merely helps to fill the blank spaces according to the standard catalogues.

Attention to cancellations gives not only added interest to one's collection, but almost invariably enhanced value as well. Quite common stamps of Queensland become minor rarities when they bear a BNG cancellation (British New-Guinea) proving their use in New Guinea, and in later days, since Norfolk Island has issued its own stamps, the fore-runners Australian States and Commonwealth stamps used in the island have become much sought after items.

Commemorative postmarks of all kinds exist in profusion in almost every

country; their use is legion, and covers a wide field; from the birth of a Prince to the death of a King or, present day a Dictator.

Philatelic exhibitions, Scout jamborees, Royal Visits and a host of other more or less important occasions have been the subject of special commemorative cancellations.

The collection of these items engenders a thirst more knowledge and you suddenly find yourself with such a wealth of information that — to quote an old phrase-form being a humdrum collector knowing nothing about everything you now know everything about nothing.

Those of you who have already "seen the light" will probably be angry that I should attempt to encourage others to enter your preserves, but I cheerfully take that risk in the hope that others present — particularly the younger collectors — will have some encouragement to extend their activities by paying more attention to the cancellations on the stamps of the countries they collect. Their reward will be worth the time and trouble they expend in acquiring the knowledge necessary to recognise the cancellations they need.

Speaking again to the younger collectors, my concluding observation is that less time spent with the standard catalogues and more study of the philatelic literature in the libraries of the various societies will soon enable you to gain more pleasure from our hobby.

STAMPS OF MALTA

(by **Edmund Rizzo** — Continued)

POSTMARKS — We have had four varieties of postmarks, the 'M' (large $7\frac{1}{2}$ mm wide) and the 'M' small $6\frac{1}{2}$ mm wide, both being $9\frac{1}{2}$ mm high; and the round and oval types of the A 25.

According to some catalogues the M type would have taken place between 1857 and 59, and that would have been before the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow local stamp came into being! Such a statement is therefore incorrect as many collectors possess the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow on bluish paper, obliterated with both types of the M cancellation. This stamp is not easy to find but it may be seen, and its value is about 20s more than the same specimen cancelled by the A 25. The former obliteration, therefore, continued to be in use after 1861; we cannot with certainty date the time in which this postmark was disused, but from what we could conclude after referring to the correspondence mentioned in the former paragraph of this article, the M was replaced by the A 25 towards the close of 1861. **

Together with the A 25 which represents the number of the colony, another postmark was brought into use, namely MALTA and date with C at the top. Of the latter there are many designs varying very little from each other.

The A 25 which was so heavy for stamps and which has ruined so many fine specimens of the ½d Yellows on bluish paper has been disused lately, and a more decent timbre is now obliterating Malta stamps.

As I have stated in my foregoing paragraphs, the Post Office at Malta was in 1885 transferred from the Imperial to the Local Government, and consequently on account of this transfer, the stamps of Great Britain which was still in stock at our Post Office were returned to England, while a new set was brought into use.

The set is the current one consisting of the following values: 1½d, 1d, 2d, 2½d, 4d, 1s, and 5s.

The main design of these stamps like all the other stamps of British Colonies consists of the head of the Queen, which are very tastefully and artistically executed. I need not give an elaborate description of the stamps in question, because they are common enough to be within the grasp of everybody, and therefore seen by all. Although I need not mention the stamps in question, I think that by noting the several errors which are to be found among the same it would benefit philatelists in general and Maltese collectors in particular.

Four errors have been noted, namely:

- ½d watermark reversed
- 1s watermark reversed
- 5s watermark reversed
- 4d imperforated

With the exception of the 4d imperforated, I cannot state the importance of the errors as I do not know the number of the same to be found, yet I can affirm that high prices have been asked for such errors.

Of the 4d imperforate, only one sheet had been issued, and was bought by a Maltese gentleman who sells the same at £3 per pair.

EDITORIAL NOTE: It has to be borne in mind that this article originally written circa 100 years ago. Some adjustments had to be made to render its construction more in line with the language of today.

Some light has also been thrown both on the M cancellation which as we know it today was employed on the ½d yellows (blued paper) for one month only, namely December 1860; it was withdrawn in January 1861.

As for the 1885 issue, several other major varieties are known to exist. Thus both the ½d green and the 5s rose are found with an inverted watermark, while some specimens of the latter value were printed on blued paper.

To conclude, not all the views expressed by the writer, conform with those of the editors.

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about the Malta Postage Stamp, may also be obtained.

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THE GRAMMAR OF PHILATELY

It is our intention to publish a series of articles which deal with the grammar of this fascinating hobby. The idea was set forward by Dr. C. Cassar (well known in our Newsletter through his several contributions) who did hand in an article some time back, on the type of paper used in the printing of stamps. As this subject struck us 'bull's eye,' we availed ourselves of the opportunity; thus we gathered and elaborated the fundamental basis of Postage Stamp Production, together with the meaning of technical words, and laid them down in chronological order for the full perusal of all those interested.

PART I

PHILATELIC GLOSSARY

The following has been taken from the Stamp Collectors Diary published by Stanley Gibbons.

- ADHESIVE** — A stamp intended to be affixed by means of a gum, as distinct from the one printed or embossed on postal stationery.
- ANILINE COLOUR** — Strictly a colour derived from coal-tar, used by philatelists to signify inks of particular brilliance especially when they show through the back of the stamp.
- BALLON MONTE** — The nickname applied to letters carried out of besieged Paries by crew-manned balloon in the Franco-Prussian war.
- BISECTED STAMPS** — Stamps cut in half (bisects) and used for half their postal value.
- BLEUTE** — Blued paper.
- BOGUS** — A label which purports to be a postage stamp and is not.
- BURELE** — Having a burelage or network on front or back of the stamp.
- CACHET** — A device often pictorial, hand stamped on an envelope or card, indicating that it has been carried in special circumstances.
- CANCELLATION** — A defacing mark on a stamp to prevent use or re-use.
- CHALKY PAPER** — Paper with a chalky surface, designed to prevent removal of the cancellation and re-use of the stamp.
- COMB PERFORATION** — Perforates three sides of a stamp in a row at one blow.
- COMPOUND PERFORATION** — Perforation of the various gauges on the different sides of a stamp.
- DEMONETISED** — Stamps no longer valid for postal use.
- DIE** — The engraved original from which printing plates or stones are produced.
- EMBOSSING** — Stamping a design in coloured or colourless relief.
- ESSAY** — A suggested but unadopted design for a postage stamp.
- FISCAL STAMPS** — Stamps employed for revenue purposes.
- FORGERY** — A fraudulent imitation of a stamp design.
- GRANITE PAPER** — Paper with coloured fibres embodied in it.

GRILLE — An embossed pattern of dots intended to break the fibres of the paper to hinder removal of a cancellation.

HARROW PERFORATION — Perforates a whole sheet of stamps at one blow.

IMPERFORATE — Without perforation or other means of easy separation of stamps.

IMPRINT — Inscription of the printer's name on the sheet margin.

LAID PAPER — Paper watermarked with closely-set parallel lines.

LINE — ENGRAVING — Printing from plates engraved in recess by means of a burin.

LITHOGRAPHY — See section on 'Printing Processes'.

LOCALS — Stamps whose validity is limited to a town, district, or route or between certain ports.

MINT — A stamp in its original condition as issued by the post office with full gum (if issued gummed).

OBSOLETE — Stamps no longer in current use.

ORIGINAL GUM (O.G.) — The gum applied to a stamp during manufacture.

OVERPRINT — Something, other than the face value, printed on a stamp subsequent to manufacture.

PANE — Part of a sheet of stamps surrounded by a margin.

PERFORATION — A method of facilitating the separation of stamps by punching rows of holes between them.

POSTAGE DUES — Labels affixed by postal officials to indicate that unpaid postage or a fine is due for payment on delivery.

POSTMARK — Any mark struck upon letters, etc, passing through the post.

PRE-CANCELLED — Stamps obliterated before issue, used by firms posting printed matter, etc., in bulk.

PROOFS — Trial impressions taken at various stages during the manufacture of a postage stamp.

PROVISIONALS — Temporary emergency stamps, often created by overprinting or surcharging existing stamps.

RECESS-PRINTING — See section on 'Printing Processes'.

RE-ENTRY — A kind of variety found on line engraved stamps in which the whole or part of the design is duplicated or deepened.

SEEBACKS — Stamps made for certain Central and South American States in the nineties, by a printing firm whose principal was N.F. Seebeck. A proviso of his terms of supply was that the plates and remainder stock should become his property after a limited period of sale.

SE-TENANT (Joined together). Stamps of different denominations or showing different varieties, when joined together in a pair.

SPECIMEN — Sample stamps bearing the words 'SPECIMEN'.

SURCHARGE — An overprint which alters or confirms the face value of the stamp.

SURFACE PRINTING — see Typography.
TETE-BECHE — stamps printed upside down in relation to one another.
TYPOGRAPHY — see section on 'Printing Processes'.
UNUSED — A stamp that has not been used or obliterated.
USED — A stamp that has been employed for postal or revenue purposes.
USED ABROAD — Stamps of a country that have been used extra-territorially.
VARIETY — Any stamp showing differences from the normal.
WATERMARK — A device, pattern or inscription produced in the substance of the paper during manufacture.
WOVE PAPER — Paper of a plain, even texture.
P.S. Part II in the next number, will deal with with papers and watermark.

THE EXHIBITION SUB-COMMITTEE

The idea of Malta staging her own Philatelic Exhibition has been mooted by many members of the Soc., but only of late has any constructive action been taken in the matter.

Recently a sub-committee of the general committee was formed with the job of investigating the matter and producing a report for the general committee on the feasibility of such a project.

Members co-opted to this committee were:—

Mr. L. Frank F.R.P.S.L. to act as chairman,
Mr. W. Scoble, and
Mr. R.J. Walley, to act as secretary.

It would be premature at this point to publish any of the committee's findings, since, this will be covered fully by their report and published in the Soc magazine. But this much can be said: Should such an exhibition be staged, its most probable 'catch phrase' name would be "PHILEXMA" (Philatelic Exhibition Malta) and organization would be very similar to exhibitions like STAMPEX and the British B.P.E. national events.

The committee realise of course that many members may hold very definite views on this subject, possibly, greatly at variance with those of the committee, therefore, in order that as many ideas as possible may be assimilated by the committee before a report is drafted, readers are invited to put their ideas and views on paper and send them to the:—

'PHILEXMA' Committee,
Secretary,
3, Hilltop Flats,
School Street,
Msida.

All suggestions so received will be acknowledged.

R.J. WALLEY
Secretary, 'PHILEXMA' Committee.

WITH AN EAR TO THE GROUND

The recent 'FAO' issue looks like being one of the best philatelic bets of 1968. Already it has been tipped by "Stamp Collecting Weekly's column, FYNDEM", and prices in U.K. are as high as 9/- mint or used, while most dealers are complaining that there are not sufficient stocks to go round. It would seem a definite shortage is the case since the Crown Agents stocks were exhausted by October the 24th, and local sources were severely rationed soon after issue for a while, but only time will prove the point.

Rumours are rife on this set, but one has a ring a truth about it, Gibbons, it seems, may list the two major flaws on the 2/6d value, i.e.:—
Right Pane, R1/6 black mark on breast.

Left Pane, R1/10 large retouch on breast.

The "Commonwealth Elizabethan Catalogue", are to list some varieties on recent Maltese issue, so far, it is known that the 'Trade Fair' issue flaws itemized below are definitely due for listing. Further details will be published as they come to light.

Trade Fair issue.

All values. R5/1 Cylinder IA

Bulge at top of 'L' in white Malta, broken line to right below Malta cross and deformed base of 'T' in Trade.

Also the Xmas 1968 issue.

1d. value. R1/6 Broken line on reclining figure.

8d. value. R8/3 Large retouch above Malta.

Further additions are expected to the "J.L. Variety Catalogue", they are:—
Human Right issue, 6d. value.

R7/5 White flaw lower right

R3/6 Large weak entry.

Trade Fair issue 8d value.

R8/3 weak entry in lower centre of design.

AN UNDISCOVERED VARIETY

A possible new variety has come to light in the form of Edward VII stamps with MULTIPLE WATERMARK (Previously uncatalogued). It was discovered on the 3d. Grey & Purple (SG42) overprinted "Revenue", by Dr. J. Saunders of the Malta Study Circle. Subsequently, one of our members found a copy after reading about the discovery in the Circle's newsletter.

If anyone has a copy, or, can throw any light on the subject, would they please contact one of the Editors?

CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF MAHATMA GANDHI

by MESSRS. E. SAID
(Stamp Dealers — Valletta)

Following the decision of the Government of India to commemorate the year October 1968 — October 1969 as the *Gandhi Centenary Year*, many countries throughout the world decided to issue a set of postage stamps to commemorate the occasion.

Among these lies Great Britain with its startling news given by the Rt. Hon. John Stonehouse M.P., the Post Master General stating that later on in the year (1969) Gandhi stamps were being issued to commemorate the event. This is the first time that a foreign statesman is to be commemorated on a British Postage Stamp.

Judging from such policies, it is far from out of place for Malta to take similar lines of action. Thus on the 24th March 1969, the General Post Office issued a 1/6 stamp as part of its contribution to Gandhi. This event was a final touch to 3 days of celebration held in Malta between February 3rd and the 5th, under the auspices of the National Commission for UNESCO on the suggestion of the Indian Government.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Porbandar on the 2nd October 1869. He studied law in London and practised his profession in Bombay. It was here that his policy of passive resistance in protest against the conditions imposed upon the Indians was first organised. His activity was intensified after World War I, when he also encouraged home industry such as hand weaving of cloth. Although imprisoned several times, he remained adamant to his beliefs and came to be recognised as a great religious leader of the Hindus.

With the proclamation of Independent India in 1947, Gandhi although against the Hindu-Moslem partition, remained fighting in his own way for the reunification of his country. Ironically enough it was during his last effort to solve the Hindu-Moslem enmity, that he was shot dead on January 30th, 1948 by a Hindu fanatic.

Some years before his assassination, people from all walks of life, considered Gandhi himself as a religious fanatic boarding on the verge of madness. Times do, however change quite substantially. Today we see in this man the champion of passive resistance, the apostle of peace and non-violence, and at the same time the leading pioneer in the legitimate struggle against colonialism.

The Maltese Gandhi stamp was designed by Chev. Cremona and portrays the statesman in typical Hindu robes with the spinning wheel to the right, against a gold background of a brown coloured stamp. The wording inscription is again in Maltese, while the date 1869 — 1969 lies on the left.

The stamps perforated 12 by 12½ were printed in photogravure by Enschede of Holland on the 'Malta Cross' watermarked paper and presented in sheets of 60 (10 x 6). There is no plate number but simply coloured guide lines. The inclusion of the Plate numbers has always been the order of the day with the British Philatelic Establishments, even since the early Malta Victorian Issues. On the other hand, foreign Firms whether Enschede, the Austrian or Italian state printers have always excluded this addendum from their products, thus we quote the 2nd Xmas Issue of 1965, the Gafa Centenary, as well as the Foundation of Valletta and Dante respectively as examples.

We are more than convinced that if arrangements are made and enough pressure is exerted, plate numbers will reappear in all printings by Non British Firms.

Gandhi is not the first on the list of prominent people commemorated on the Malta Postage stamps. Since the grant of Independence in 1964, the following have had an issue all to themselves.

- i) Dante — Centenary of birth (7th) — 7th July 1965.
- ii) Churchill — 1st Anniversary of death — 24th January 1966.
- iii) Kennedy — Inauguration of Memorial Grove — 28th May 1966.
- iv) Gafa — 3rd Centenary of Death — 1st August 1967.
- v) La Valette — 4th Centenary of death — 1st August 1968.

This list stop here for the present, the future may well have some surprises in store for us.

As for the long awaited 'First Day of Issue' cancellor, this was certainly marked by its absence, it is the sincere hope of one and all that it will make its appearance with the next commemorative issue.

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