

Quadrics in a finite projective space

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Abstract In $\text{PG}(n, q)$, properties of non-singular quadrics have been frequently studied. In this paper, the number of points on a singular quadric is found, and some properties that are related to these quadrics are investigated. The weights of codewords in some error-correcting codes are found.

1 Introduction

Let $V = V(n + 1, q)$ be an $(n + 1)$ -dimensional vector space over the field K with zero element 0 . Consider the equivalence relation on the elements of $V \setminus \{0\}$ whose equivalence classes are the one-dimensional subspaces of V with the zero deleted. Thus, if $X, Y \in V \setminus \{0\}$, then $X = (x_0, \dots, x_n)$ is equivalent to $Y = (y_0, \dots, y_n)$ if $Y = tX$ for some t in $K_0 = K \setminus \{0\}$; that is, $y_i = tx_i$ for all i . Then the set of equivalence classes is the n -dimensional projective space over K and is denoted by $\text{PG}(n, K)$; when $K = \mathbf{F}_q$, it is $\text{PG}(n, q)$ or \mathbf{P}^n .

A point with coordinate vector $X = (x_0, \dots, x_n)$ is denoted by $P(X) = P(x_0, x_1, \dots, x_n)$, where $x_0, x_1, \dots, x_n \in \mathbf{F}_q$ and not all zero.

A subspace of dimension m , or m -space, of $\text{PG}(n, q)$ is a set of points, all of whose representing vectors form, together with the origin, a subspace of dimension $m + 1$ of $V(n + 1, q)$; it is denoted by Π_m . Subspaces of dimension zero, one, two and three are called a point, a line, a plane, and a solid. A subspace of dimension $n - 1$ is called a prime or a hyperplane.

The set of projectivities fixing $\text{PG}(n, q)$ is the group $\text{PGL}(n + 1, q)$.

The theory of quadrics and their number of points in $\text{PG}(n, q)$ is motivated by many important applications, especially in the theory of error-correcting codes; see [3, 9, 2].

The theory of non-singular quadrics and their number of points was studied by Segre [10]. A comprehensive summary may be found in [7, Chapter 1]. In this paper, on the other hand, the number of points of singular quadrics is determined, as well as some related properties. [11].

Some undefined terms can be found in references [1, 11].

2 Quadrics in $\text{PG}(n, q)$

A hypersurface of the second degree in $\text{PG}(n, q)$ is a quadric.

A quadric \mathcal{Q} is given by a quadratic form; that is,

$$\mathcal{Q} = V(F) = \{P(X) \mid F(X) = 0\},$$

where $F \in \mathbf{F}_q[X_0, \dots, X_n]$, and

$$\begin{aligned} F(X) &= \sum_{i,j=0}^n a_{ij}X_iX_j = a_{00}X_0^2 + a_{01}X_0X_1 + \dots \\ &= \sum_{i=0}^n a_{ii}X_i^2 + \sum_{i \neq j, i,j=0}^n a_{ij}X_iX_j. \end{aligned}$$

When $p \neq 2$, $t_{ij} = t_{ji} = (a_{ij} + a_{ji})/2$. Therefore, with $T = (t_{ij})$, $X = (X_0, \dots, X_n)$ and X^* its transpose,

$$\begin{aligned} F(X) &= \sum_{i,j=0}^n t_{ij}X_iX_j \\ &= XTX^*. \end{aligned}$$

For a quadric \mathcal{Q} , the rank of \mathcal{Q} , denoted $r(\mathcal{Q})$, is the smallest number of indeterminates appearing in F under any change of coordinate system. The quadric \mathcal{Q} is degenerate or singular if $r(\mathcal{Q}) < n + 1$; otherwise, it is non-degenerate or non-singular.

2.1 Quadrics in $\text{PG}(2, q)$ and $\text{PG}(3, q)$

The numbers of points of the quadrics \mathcal{Q} in $\text{PG}(n, q)$, for $n = 2$ and $n = 3$, are given in Tables 1 and 2.

The quadrics of $\text{PG}(2, q)$ fall in four orbits under $\text{PGL}(3, q)$, as in Table 1. The quadrics of $\text{PG}(3, q)$ fall into six orbits under $\text{PGL}(4, q)$, as in Table 2.

Rank	Description	$ \mathcal{Q} $
1	repeated line	$q + 1$
2	pair of distinct line	$2q + 1$
2	point	1
3	conic	$q + 1$

Table 1. Quadrics in $\text{PG}(2, q)$

Rank	Description	$ \mathcal{Q} $
1	repeated plane	$q^2 + q + 1$
2	pair of distinct planes	$2q^2 + q + 1$
2	line	$q + 1$
3	quadric cone	$q^2 + q + 1$
4	hyperbolic quadric	$(q + 1)^2$
4	elliptic quadric	$q^2 + 1$

Table 2. Quadrics in $\text{PG}(3, q)$

3 Non-singular quadrics in $\text{PG}(n, q)$

Theorem 3.1. ([7], Section 1.1) *The number of projectively distinct non-singular quadrics in $\text{PG}(n, q)$ is one or two as n is even or odd. They have the following canonical forms.*

- (1) $n = 2m, m \geq 0$,

$$\mathcal{Q} = \mathcal{P}_n = V(X_0^2 + X_1X_2 + \dots + X_{2m-1}X_{2m});$$

the number of points is

$$\frac{q^{2m} - 1}{q - 1}.$$

(2) $n = 2m - 1, m \geq 1,$

(a)

$$\mathcal{Q} = \mathcal{H}_n = V(X_0X_1 + X_2X_3 + \cdots + X_{2m-2}X_{2m-1});$$

the number of points is

$$\frac{(q^{m-1} + 1)(q^m - 1)}{q - 1},$$

(b)

$$\mathcal{Q} = \mathcal{E}_n = V(f(X_0, X_1) + X_2X_3 + \cdots + X_{2m-2}X_{2m-1}),$$

where f is any irreducible binary quadratic form; the number of points is

$$\frac{(q^m + 1)(q^{m-1} - 1)}{q - 1}.$$

The quadric symbols are \mathcal{P} for parabolic, \mathcal{H} for hyperbolic and \mathcal{E} for elliptic.

4 Singular quadrics in $\mathbf{PG}(n, q)$

Theorem 4.1. *As for non-singular quadrics, singular quadrics are of three types.*

(1) Let $2m < n, m \geq 0.$

A singular parabolic quadric has the standard form,

$$\mathcal{P} = V(X_0^2 + X_1X_2 + \cdots + X_{2m-1}X_{2m}).$$

Its number of points is

$$q^{n-1} + q^{n-2} + \cdots + \cdots + q + 1 = |\mathbf{P}^{n-1}|.$$

(2) Let $2m - 1 < n, m \geq 1.$

(a) A singular hyperbolic quadric has the standard form,

$$\mathcal{H} = V(X_0X_1 + X_2X_3 + \cdots + X_{2m-2}X_{2m-1}).$$

Its number of points is

$$q^{n-1} + q^{n-2} + \cdots + 2q^{n-m} + q^{n-m-1} + \cdots + 1 = |\mathbf{P}^{n-1}| + q^{n-m}.$$

(b) A singular elliptic quadric has the standard form,

$$V(f(X_0, X_1) + X_2X_3 + \cdots + X_{2m-2}x_{2m-1}),$$

with f irreducible over $\mathbf{F}_q.$ Its number of points is

$$q^{n-1} + q^{n-2} + \cdots + q^{n-m+1} + q^{n-m-1} + \cdots + 1 = |\mathbf{P}^{n-1}| - q^{n-m}.$$

Proof. For $2m < n, m \geq 0,$ the number of points on a singular parabolic quadric is

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{q^{2m} - 1}{q - 1} \times q^{n-2m} + |\mathbf{P}^{n-2m-1}| \\ & = q^{n-1} + \cdots + q + 1 = |\mathbf{P}^{n-1}|. \end{aligned}$$

The variety $V(X_0X_1 + X_2X_3 + \dots + X_{2m-2}X_{2m-1})$ is the disjoint union of the subvariety for which at least one of x_0, \dots, x_{2m-1} is non-zero. Then

$$|V(X_0X_1 + X_2X_3 + \dots + X_{2m-2}X_{2m-1})| = \frac{(q^{m-1} + 1)(q^m - 1)}{q - 1},$$

with the subvariety for which X_0, \dots, X_{2m-1} are all zero. As for the first subvariety if $2m - 1 < n$, then there are $n - 2m + 1$ free variables; therefore, the number of points in these cases is,

$$|V(X_0X_1 + X_2X_3 + \dots + X_{2m-2}X_{2m-1})| \times |\mathbf{F}_q^{n-2m+1}| = \frac{(q^{m-1} + 1)(q^m - 1)}{q - 1} \times q^{n-2m+1}.$$

For the second subvariety,

$$\mathbf{P}\{X_0 = X_1 = \dots = X_{2m-1} = 0\} = \mathbf{P}\{e_{2m}, \dots, e_n\} \simeq \mathbf{P}^{n-2m}.$$

Therefore, the number of points on a singular quadric is

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{(q^{m-1} + 1)(q^m - 1)}{q - 1} \times q^{n-2m+1} + |\mathbf{P}^{n-2m}| \\ &= q^{n-1} + q^{n-2} + \dots + 2q^{n-m} + q^{n-m-1} + \dots + 1 \\ &= |\mathbf{P}^{n-1}| + q^{n-m}. \end{aligned}$$

Similarly, the number of points on a singular elliptic quadric is

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{(q^{m-1} - 1)(q^m + 1)}{q - 1} \times q^{n-2m+1} + |\mathbf{P}^{n-2m}| \\ &= q^{n-1} + q^{n-2} + \dots + q^{n-m+1} + q^{n-m-1} + \dots + 1 \\ &= |\mathbf{P}^{n-1}| - q^{n-m}. \end{aligned}$$

Example 4.2. (1) In $\text{PG}(6, q)$, the singular hyperbolic quadric □

$$V(X_1X_5 - X_2X_6),$$

for $n = 6, m = 2$, contains $q^5 + 2q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$ points.

(2) In $\text{PG}(7, q)$, the singular parabolic quadric

$$V(X_1^2 - X_2X_3)$$

contains $q^6 + q^5 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$ points.

Now, sections of a singular quadric by a subspace are considered.

Proposition 4.3. The number of points on a section of a quadric with base in Π_{2m-1} or Π_{2m} in $\text{PG}(n, q)$ by a subspace of dimension $n - (m + m')$ is shown in Table 3.

Equation of quadric and conditions	Number of points
If $2m - 1 + m' < n, m \geq 1, m' \geq 1,$ $\begin{cases} x_0x_1 + x_2x_3 + \dots + x_{2m-2}x_{2m-1} = 0 \\ x_{2m} = x_{2m+1} = \dots = x_{2m-1+m'} = 0. \end{cases}$	$\frac{q^{n-m'} - 1}{q - 1} + q^{n-m'-m}$
If $2m - 1 + m' < n, m \geq 1, m' \geq 1,$ $\begin{cases} f(x_0, x_1) + x_2x_3 + \dots + x_{2m-2}x_{2m-1} = 0 \\ x_{2m} = x_{2m+1} = \dots = x_{2m-1+m'} = 0. \end{cases}$	$\frac{q^{n-m'} - 1}{q - 1} - q^{n-m'-m}$
If $2m + m' < n, m \geq 0, m' \geq 1,$ $\begin{cases} x_0^2 + x_1x_2 + \dots + x_{2m-1}x_{2m} = 0 \\ x_{2m+1} = x_{2m+2} = \dots = x_{2m+m'} = 0. \end{cases}$	$\frac{q^{n-m'} - 1}{q - 1}$

Table 3. The number of points on a singular quadric

Proof. The same idea as in the previous proof is applied. If $2m - 1 + m' < n$, $m \geq 1$, $m' \geq 1$, then the number of points in the hyperbolic case is

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{(q^{m-1} + 1)(q^m - 1)}{q - 1} \times q^{n-2m+1-m'} + |\mathbf{P}^{n-2m-m'}| \\ &= q^{n-m'-1} + q^{n-m'-2} + \dots + 2q^{n-m'-m} + q^{n-m'-m-1} + \dots + 1 \\ &= |\mathbf{P}^{n-m'-1}| + q^{n-m'-m}. \end{aligned}$$

In the elliptic case, with $2m - 1 + m' < n$, $m \geq 1$, $m' \geq 1$, then the number of points is

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{(q^{m-1} - 1)(q^m + 1)}{q - 1} \times q^{n-2m+1-m'} + |\mathbf{P}^{n-2m-m'}| \\ &= q^{n-m'-1} + q^{n-m'-2} + \dots + q^{n-m'-m+1} + q^{n-m'-m-1} + \dots + 1 \\ &= |\mathbf{P}^{n-m'-1}| - q^{n-m'-m}. \end{aligned}$$

In the parabolic case, with $2m + m' < n$, $m \geq 0$, $m' \geq 1$, the number of points is

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{q^{2m} - 1}{q - 1} \times q^{n-2m-m'} + |\mathbf{P}^{n-2m-1-m'}| \\ &= q^{n-m'-1} + \dots + q + 1 = |\mathbf{P}^{n-m'-1}|. \end{aligned}$$

□

Remark 4.4. In particular, when $m' = 0$, Theorem 4.1 is obtained.

Example 4.5. Let V be an 8-dimensional vector space, where

$$x_6^2 - x_4x_8 = 0, \quad x_1 = x_2 = x_5 = x_7 = 0.$$

This corresponds, in $\text{PG}(7, q)$, with $m' = 4$, to a singular parabolic quadric with $q^2 + q + 1$ points.

Theorem 4.6. In $\text{PG}(n, q)$, let Π_r be a subspace of dimension r . If $\mathcal{Q} = V(F^s)$ is a quadric given by F in $\text{PG}(s, q)$, then

$$|V(F^n)| = |V(F^r)| \cdot q^{n-r} + |\text{PG}(n - r - 1, q)|.$$

Proof. If there exists $i \leq r$ with $x_i \neq 0$, for $r < n$, then write $|V(F^s)|$ for the the number of points of $V(F)$ in $\text{PG}(s, q)$. With $n - r$ new variables and so q^{n-r} possibilities, in the number of points is

$$|V(F^r)| \cdot q^{n-r}.$$

If $x_i = 0$ for all $i \leq r$, the number of points is $|\text{PG}(n - r - 1, q)|$. So, the number of points of $V(F)$ in $\text{PG}(n, q)$ is

$$|V(F^n)| = |V(F^r)| \cdot q^{n-r} + |\text{PG}(n - r - 1)|. \quad \square$$

Remark 4.7. This formula is equivalent to that of Corollary 1.42 in [7].

Corollary 4.8. Since the quadrics \mathcal{Q} in $\text{PG}(3, q)$ fall into six classes under projective equivalence, the numbers of points on a singular quadric in $\text{PG}(7, q)$ with base Π_3 is given in Table 4.

Rank	F	$ V(F^7) $
1	x_0^2	$q^6 + q^5 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$
2	x_0x_1	$2q^6 + q^5 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$
2	$f(x_0, x_1)$	$q^5 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$
3	$x_0^2 + x_1x_2$	$q^6 + q^5 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$
4	$x_0x_1 + x_2x_3$	$q^6 + 2q^5 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$
4	$f(x_0, x_1) + x_2x_3$	$q^6 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1$

Table 4. The number of points on a singular quadric of rank ≤ 4 in $\text{PG}(7, q)$

Proof. From Theorem 4.6, for $n = 7$, $r = 3$, the number of points on a singular quadric of rank < 7 is $q^4 \times |V(F^3)|$. Hence, the number of points on a singular quadric in $\text{PG}(7, q)$ is

$$|V(F^7)| = |V(F^3)| \times q^4 + (q^3 + q^2 + q + 1). \quad \square$$

5 An application in Coding Theory

An example clarifies the importance of the number of points on a quadric as applied to the weight of codewords in certain error-correcting codes.

Let V be an 8-dimensional vector space over an arbitrary field K . Consider the mapping $\phi_\omega : V \rightarrow \wedge^2 V^*$ sending $v \mapsto \iota_v \omega$, where ι_v is the operation of the interior multiplication defined by

$$\langle \iota_v \omega, \beta \rangle = \langle \omega, v \wedge \beta \rangle, \quad \text{for all } \beta \in \wedge^2 V.$$

Here, \langle, \rangle is the pairing between $\wedge^j V^*$ and $\wedge^j V$ for each j .

Definition 5.1. Given a 2-form $\lambda \in \wedge^2 V^*$, the k -th Pfaffian of λ , $\text{Pf}_k(\lambda) \in \wedge^{2k} V^*$ is defined inductively as follows for each $k \geq 1$:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Pf}_0(\lambda) &= 1; \\ \iota_v \lambda \wedge \text{Pf}_{k-1}(\lambda) &= \iota_v \text{Pf}_k(\lambda), \quad \text{for all } v \in V. \end{aligned}$$

This $\text{Pf}_k(\lambda)$ generalizes the form $\lambda^k/k! = (\lambda \wedge \dots \wedge \lambda)/k!$.

Proposition 5.2. [3] (k -th Pfaffian of a 2-form)

- (1) Given $\lambda \in \wedge^2 V^*$, $\lambda \neq 0$, for each $k \geq 1$ there is a unique element $\text{Pf}_k(\lambda) \in \wedge^{2k} V^*$.
- (2) $\text{Pf}_k(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2) = \sum_{j=0}^k \text{Pf}_j(\lambda_1) \wedge \text{Pf}_{k-j}(\lambda_2)$.
- (3) The rank of λ is the unique integer $2r$ such that $\text{Pf}_r(\lambda) \neq 0$ and $\text{Pf}_{r+1}(\lambda) = 0$.

Definition 5.3. [3] Given a non-degenerate trivector ω on \mathbf{F}_q^8 , the k -th weight variety of ω is the subvariety of \mathbf{P}^7 given by

$$X_k(\omega) = \mathbf{P}\{x \in \mathbf{F}_q^8 \setminus \{0\} \mid \text{Pf}_{k+1}(\iota_x \omega) = 0\}.$$

Then

$$\emptyset = X_0(\omega) \subset X_1(\omega) \subset X_2(\omega) \subset X_{\lfloor \frac{8-1}{2} \rfloor = 3}(\omega) = \mathbf{P}^7.$$

Lemma 5.4. [9] Given a non-degenerate trivector ω on \mathbf{F}_q^8 , let

$$n_i := |X_i(\omega)| - |X_{i-1}(\omega)|.$$

The weight $\text{wt}(\omega)$ is given by

$$\text{wt}(\omega) = q^{15} + q^{13} + q^{12} + q^{11} + q^{10} + q^9 + q^8 + q^6 - q^6 \left(\frac{|X_2(\omega)| + q^2 |X_1(\omega)|}{1 + q + q^2} \right), \quad (5.1)$$

Some undefined terms can be found in references [3] and [9].

To calculate the weight $\text{wt}(\omega_{8,7})$, where $\omega_{8,7} = e_1 e_2 e_3 + e_1 e_4 e_5 + e_1 e_6 e_7 + e_2 e_5 e_6 + e_2 e_7 e_8$ in [8], let $x = \sum_{j=1}^8 x_j e_j$. Then

$$\text{Pf}_2(\iota_x \omega_{8,7}) = \sum_{j=1}^8 x_j^2 \text{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_j} \omega_{8,7}) + \sum_{i < j} x_i x_j (\iota_{e_i} \omega_{8,7}) \wedge (\iota_{e_j} \omega_{8,7}). \quad (5.2)$$

Now, $\text{Pf}_2(\iota_x \omega_i)$ can be calculated using the above formula (5.2): set it equal to zero to determine the varieties $X_1(\omega_{8,7})$. The forms $\iota_{e_j} \omega_{8,7}$ and $\text{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_j} \omega_{8,7})$ for $j = 1 \dots 8$ are as

follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \iota_{e_1}\omega_{8,7} &= e_2e_3 + e_4e_5 + e_6e_7, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_1}\omega_{8,7}) &= e_2e_3e_4e_5 + e_2e_3e_6e_7 + e_4e_5e_6e_7; \\
 \iota_{e_2}\omega_{8,7} &= e_3e_1 + e_5e_6 + e_7e_8, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_2}\omega_{8,7}) &= e_3e_1e_5e_6 + e_3e_1e_7e_8 + e_5e_6e_7e_8; \\
 \iota_{e_3}\omega_{8,7} &= e_1e_2, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_3}\omega_{8,7}) &= 0; \\
 \iota_{e_4}\omega_{8,7} &= e_5e_1, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_4}\omega_{8,7}) &= 0; \\
 \iota_{e_5}\omega_{8,7} &= e_1e_4 + e_6e_2, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_5}\omega_{8,7}) &= e_1e_4e_6e_2; \\
 \iota_{e_6}\omega_{8,7} &= e_7e_1 + e_2e_5, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_6}\omega_{8,7}) &= e_7e_1e_2e_5; \\
 \iota_{e_7}\omega_{8,7} &= e_1e_6 + e_8e_2, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_7}\omega_{8,7}) &= e_1e_6e_8e_2; \\
 \iota_{e_8}\omega_{8,7} &= e_2e_7, & \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_8}\omega_{8,7}) &= 0.
 \end{aligned} \tag{5.3}$$

If $\mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_x\omega_{8,7}) = 0$, then

$$X_1(\omega_{8,7}) = \{x \in \mathbf{F}_q^8 \setminus \{0\} \mid x_1 = x_2 = x_5 = x_7 = x_6^2 + x_4x_8 = 0\},$$

by Proposition 4.3; then

$$|X_1(\omega_{8,7})| = q^2 + q + 1.$$

Now, the varieties $X_2(\omega_{8,7})$ and their cardinality are computed. Let $x = \sum_{j=1}^8 x_j e_j$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mathbf{Pf}_3(\iota_x\omega_{8,7}) &= \sum_{j=1}^8 x_j^3 \mathbf{Pf}_3(\iota_{e_j}\omega_{8,7}) + \\
 &\sum_{i < j} [x_i^2 x_j \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_i}\omega_{8,7}) \wedge (\iota_{e_j}\omega_{8,7}) + x_i x_j^2 (\iota_{e_i}\omega_{8,7}) \wedge \mathbf{Pf}_2(\iota_{e_j}\omega_{8,7})]. \tag{5.4}
 \end{aligned}$$

Now, $\mathbf{Pf}_3(\iota_x\omega_{8,i})$ is calculated using the above formula (5.4): set it equal to zero to determine the variety $X_2(\omega_{8,7})$. Then

$$\mathbf{Pf}_3(\iota_{e_j}\omega_{8,7}) = \begin{cases} e_2e_3e_4e_5e_6e_7 & \text{for } j = 1, \\ e_3e_1e_5e_6e_7e_8 & \text{for } j = 2, \\ 0 & \text{for } j = 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. \end{cases}$$

When $\mathbf{Pf}_3(\iota_x\omega_{8,7}) = 0$, this implies that $x_1 = x_2 = 0$. Therefore

$$\begin{aligned}
 X_2(\omega_{8,7}) &= \{x \mid x_1 = x_2 = 0\} \\
 &= \mathbf{P}\{e_3, e_4, e_5, e_6, e_7, e_8\} \simeq \mathbf{P}^5; \\
 |X_2(\omega_{8,7})| &= |\mathbf{P}^5| = q^5 + q^4 + q^3 + q^2 + q + 1.
 \end{aligned}$$

Also, using (5.1), the weight of $\omega_{8,7}$ is

$$wt(\omega_{8,7}) = q^{15} + q^{13} + q^{12} + q^{11} + q^{10}.$$

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