

Trinity College Dublin Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath The University of Dublin

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Unlocking The Fagel Collection

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Final Project Report

The Library of Trinity College Dublin KB National Library of the Netherlands

September 2023



King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima, with Laura Shanahan (Head of Research Collections) and Prof. Chris Morash (former Vice Provost) in the Library of Trinity College Dublin, as part of their State Visit to Ireland in 2019

Summary

The 'Unlocking the Fagel Collection' project was a major collaboration between the Library of Trinity College Dublin and the KB National Library of the Netherlands, made possible by the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Begun in late 2020 and completed in June 2023, this project has been a resounding success of international collaboration in the field of cultural heritage and was a fitting tribute to the ongoing collaboration between the Netherlands and Ireland as signalled by the State Visit of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima to Ireland in 2019.

The Fagel collection is the largest Dutch early modern private library still preserved as a whole. It was the working library of one of the most influential political families in the Dutch Republic: the Fagel family. Since 1802, this singular collection has been held in the historic Old Library of Trinity College Dublin. The aim of the project was to fulfil the exceptional research potential of this collection, by making it available to the global research community and a wider public for the first time. Besides the inclusion of the Dutch titles into the STCN (the Dutch retrospective national bibliography), important steps have been made towards new collaborations and partnerships that will increase the use and visibility of this gem of printed heritage.



Copies of works from the Fagel collection displayed in the Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands

Cataloguing

A core aim of the project was to fully document the approximately 30,000 printed items collected by the Fagel family. This has largely been achieved through the cataloguing of the individual books and pamphlets into the retrospective national bibliography of the Netherlands, the Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands (STCN). The records created were subsequently incorporated into the catalogue of the Library of Trinity College Dublin (which also exports its records to global databases). During the project period 2020–23, the cataloguing of the Dutch publications into the STCN was successfully completed.

As of September 2023, more than 14,200 editions, representing over 16,000 distinct copies in the Fagel library have been catalogued in the STCN. Over 17% of these editions are the only known copy recorded in the STCN and had therefore never previously been documented in the Dutch national bibliography. Of the 2,500 State Publications from the Fagel collection now in the STCN, 58% are the only known copy. As a result of these contributions, the Fagel Collection represents the third largest historical collection within this national bibliography of Dutch print heritage from before 1801.

This major accomplishment, to complete the recording of all Dutch imprints, was fulfilled despite inevitable delays experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, technical challenges as a result of updates to the STCN database infrastructure, capital building works in Trinity College Dublin and difficulty recruiting a replacement cataloguer following the resignation of one in 2021. These conditions did, however, cause some delay to the cataloguing of the non-Dutch imprints, which will be completed in a second phase.

It is expected that a small number of materials will continue to be added to the STCN over the course of continued work on the Fagel Collection, where these materials were not previously discoverable through local documentation.



Browse all of the Fagel Collection holdings recorded in the STCN at data.cerl.org/stcn



Title-pages of Fagel items recorded in the STCN for the first time

Future Cataloguing Activity

To ensure continuity of the original mission to record all printed items of the Fagel Collection, the Library of Trinity College Dublin has secured substantive additional funds through an Irish government cultural heritage investment programme to catalogue the remaining non-Dutch printed works. This programme will be completed in 2025.

The additional funding has ensured that this overall project will be delivered to the highest possible standard, with full quality catalogue records created for each item in the collection including information about provenance and material characteristics.



Online visualisation of a digitised volume of pamphlets

Digitisation

To supplement the full documentation of the Fagel Collection, one of the project's aims was to explore the possibility of mass digitisation of material. A sub-set of historically important and culturally rich pamphlet volumes were used to pilot the methodology required for the ongoing project and will also be used to inform the KB's intended pamphlet digitisation project. The complex nature of these unique composite volumes containing up to 111 distinct printed items of varying formats within a single binding, presented really useful information for the preparation of ongoing activities in this area.

As this project activity continues from 2023 onwards, a digital photographer will be appointed specifically to complete ongoing digitisation of the Fagel Collection. This will ensure work continues to further open up the collection for research. Digitised materials from the Fagel Collection will be used in the exploration of digital enhancements in collaboration with researchers from Transkribus, and the Huygens Institute.

In 2020, the Library of Trinity College Dublin upgraded its Digital Collections repository to enable the use of the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) on images. IIIF allows more ready sharing and comparison of images, and this model is also being adopted by the KB for its new repository. Through the provision of individual permanent links associated with each digitised item, the images from Fagel materials can be more readily shared and linked to from the databases of the KB (e.g. STCN, DELPHER, Het Geheugen, etc.).



Camera setup for digitisation of the Historia Naturalis Brasiliae (*TCD Fag.M.1.6*)



Fagel digitised content can be accessed at digitalcollections.tcd.ie



Joe Nankivell, Project Senior Bibliographer, with Laura O'Farrell, Project Conservator: photographing State Publications for the STCN record

Preservation and Conservation

The initial proposal for preservation and conservation work in this project was the treatment of 100 items from the Fagel collection requiring some kind of stabilisation, and to create protective boxes for these. Activity in this domain has in fact far exceeded this ambition, in part through the support provided with additional funding.

In addition to preservation work completed on 60 volumes, over 100 volumes have undergone full interventive conservation treatment since the project commenced in 2020. It is worth noting that the volumes treated in this period contained upwards of 2,500 printed items which could not otherwise have been catalogued or consulted in any way. Additionally, some 200 volumes have been placed into purpose-designed archival boxes.

The project conservator also facilitated the photography and cataloguing of complex volumes of State Publications. Handling of these composite volumes required the dedicated support of a conservator due to the nature of the volumes and the fragility of their original binding structures. For the planned continuation of digitisation of Fagel materials, a conservator will be appointed specifically to ensure the conservation of materials to be imaged and to assist the photographer.



Fag.H.9.28 - Before and after conservation treatment

Research and Scholarship

The impact of the cataloguing, digitisation and conservation work undertaken through this project has been a noticeable increase in research activity and engagement with the Fagel library collection. Locally, this has been facilitated by project staff at Trinity supporting teaching in undergraduate courses and graduate seminars, such that over 2021/22 and 2022/23 the Fagel Collection was integrated in the teaching of three departments and one interdisciplinary program. This further resulted in graduate research undertaken by Trinity students, including a PhD project due to be completed in 2024.

Research in the Fagel Collection was also formally supported through the provision of a three-month Visiting Research Fellowship, taken up by Dr Emily Monty in late 2022, and supported by the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute. Dr Monty's project (Composite Chorography: Collecting the Americas in the Fagel Collection in the Library of Trinity College Dublin) investigated the multiplicity of representations of the Americas in the printed and visual materials owned by the Fagels. This was a first critical consideration of the complementarity of text, image and cartography in the library collection, and has since expanded to consideration of the archival and art collections that originally accompanied the books. It also opened up research into the colonial aspects of the Fagel book collection. The innovative investigations undertaken by Dr Monty were communicated in academic presentations at Trinity and abroad.

Project staff and affiliates also shared findings from their work throughout the project at numerous local, national and international conferences, for example at the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing conference in 2022. Diverse findings were further communicated through various research blogs and articles (see the bibliography for details).

The capstone event was a three-day research symposium, *Unlocking the Fagel Collection: The Library and its Context*, held in Dublin in June 2023. Twenty-six presenters gathered from five countries shared the results of ongoing and cutting-edge research into such disparate subjects as the role of information management to the *greffierschap*, the artist responsible for colouring certain exquisite items, astronomical charts in the collection, 3D digital representations of the library, maps of Surinam owned by the Fagels, and many more. To harness the growth of such rich enquiries, and to ensure their interdisciplinary crosspollination, an edited volume of scholarly articles is in development with an academic publisher.



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Emily Monty in conversation with project manager Ann-Marie Hansen

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As Fagel Fellow, I benefited from the collaborative spirit of the Fagel project while receiving ample support for my particular research into the visual dimensions of the collection, from illustrated books to maps. The opportunity to have sustained access to this collection, time for my ideas to gestate, and a home in an intellectual community in the Library and the Long Room Hub, made this an exceedingly productive fellowship. In addition to providing financial and practical resources to support my work, the fellowship increased the visibility of my research into the collection and allowed me to form lasting academic partnerships that I have brought with me and continue to nurture.

Dr Emily Monty



The Fagel video playlist on the KB YouTube channel

Communication and Promotion

From the outset of the project, a suite of communication activities was organised to ensure public awareness of the growing accessibility of the Fagel Collection. These included regular social media postings reaching the wide community of followers of Trinity's Library and the KB. In addition, project staff and users of the collection – including students and visiting researchers – were invited to share their explorations and insights with writeups published on the **project webpage** and the **TCD Research Collections Blog**. In this way, the project provided a platform to encourage exploration of multiple lines of enquiry within the library's holdings. These texts now serve as models to inspire – especially students and new users – engagement with the Fagel Collection.

A highly successful and visible output of the project is the series of twenty brief videos that were produced, incorporating interviews with historians and librarians in locations in The Hague and Dublin relevant to the Fagels and their library. These outlined the history and relevance of the Fagels, their collection, and the work to make these accessible to the world, and in such a way as to communicate this to a wider audience in a lasting manner. Reflecting the cultural and institutional collaboration, half of the videos are in Dutch with English subtitling, and the other half are in English with Dutch subtitling. The videos were published by both the **KB** and **TCD**, and are available on their respective YouTube channels, in addition to the project webpage.



Videography of the Fagel Collection with Fellow Emeritus Edward McParland



Members of the extended Fagel project team from the KB and TCD at the exhibition launch

Numerous presentations on the goals, progress and findings of the project were given. Talks were organised in Ireland and the Netherlands, for a broad range of audiences from general to specialised. As a project, *Unlocking the Fagel Collection* was represented at such events as the Embassy of the Netherlands in Ireland's online King's Day celebration in 2021, the Renaissance Society of America and International Federation of Library Associations congresses in 2022, and Ireland's Heritage Week 2023. In addition, project staff organised and hosted well-attended public events in The Hague and Dublin, at which the work of the project and related research was presented to interested audiences from the university and heritage sectors.

Launched in conjunction with the final celebratory symposium, a special exhibition of 21 unique objects from the Fagel library was curated for display in TCD's iconic Long Room. This exhibition drew attention to the diversity of holdings in the Fagel Collection, their unique and exquisite quality, and related this to their significance for European heritage. Installed from June to September 2023, the display was seen by over 375,000 visitors to the Old Library. The exhibition moreover drew significant media attention in Ireland with a feature piece in the Irish Times, and a web article in the widely popular *Fine Books & Collections* magazine.



View of cases exhibiting items from the Fagel Collection



Helen Shenton (Head Librarian and Archivist, TCD), Ambassador Adriaan Palm, Geertrui Verbraak (member of KB board of directors) and Marieke van Delft (curator emeritus, KB) launching the Unlocking the Fagel Collection exhibition



Laura Shanahan, Ann-Marie Hansen (both TCD) and Esther van Gelder (KB) interviewed by Garrelt Verhoeven at an event at the KB in 2022



Representatives of the TCD and KB libraries with Ambassador Brendan Rogers in The Hague

Cultural Diplomacy

The Fagel Collection continues to be a draw for international diplomatic visits and events in Dublin and has had the continued and ongoing support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Ireland, and the Embassy of Ireland in the Netherlands. Since tours once again became possible in late 2021, visitors have included staff from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visiting ambassadors and consuls of the Netherlands and Belgium, and the Minister-President of Flanders.

In March 2023, Ambassador Adriaan Palm hosted a network lunch for colleagues in Dublin working with Dutch cultural artefacts, including representatives of the National Gallery of Ireland, Culture Ireland, and Trinity College Dublin. The connections made through such meetings have led to knowledge sharing and development of future plans for the Fagel Collection.

With the support of Ambassador Brendan Rogers, the Fagel project team organised a series of events and meetings in The Hague in November 2022. These successfully drew together an extensive network of individuals from research and heritage institutions across the Netherlands that share links to or interest in the Fagel family collections. Open exchange resulting from these meetings has proven effective in coordinating mutually beneficial efforts for long-term planning around digitisation, research and presentation.



Screenshot of the online King's Day Fagel Event organised by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Ireland, 27 April 2021



Minister-President Jan Jambon viewing books from the Fagel Collection during a State Visit to Ireland in 2022

Follow-on Activity

The incredible success of *Unlocking the Fagel Collection* over the years 2020–2023 is such that the completion of the project is leading directly to a continuation. As indicated above, substantial additional funding has been secured to progress the important work to record all remaining items in the collection, including circa 3,000 sheets of maps.

The Library of Trinity College and the KB National Library of the Netherlands have agreed to maintain the collaboration now in place. Concretely, this will ensure that any further materials uncovered through ongoing work are recorded in the STCN, and that digital surrogates resulting from future digitisation are incorporated into that database. Furthermore, coordinated digitisation and presentation of the respective pamphlet collections of these institutions is to be envisaged.

The KB and TCD have also commenced plans for further public engagement with the collection. This entails an exhibition of materials from the Fagel Collection in the Netherlands in the coming years, as well as the production of an associated catalogue or coffee-table book highlighting the collection. Discussion with other partners to realise this have already taken place.

These plans will be informed by consultation of a nascent network that includes representatives from the Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands, the National Archives of the Netherlands, the Huis van het boek (House of the Book Museum), Haags Historisch museum (The Hague Historical Museum), University Libraries of Leiden, and the National Gallery of Ireland.

Discussion has commenced with the National Archives of the Netherlands (NA) regarding opening up of the Fagel

archives as a step towards making new avenues of research possible into the Fagel family, their collections, and their role in Dutch history. The NA's Fagel collection, with some 129 metres of archival material, is being appraised and prioritised for restoration work and catalogue upgrades to prepare full digitisation. The preparatory work towards this has begun.

Members of this advisory network have contributed to a further planned action for 2024, which is the recruitment of a postdoctoral research fellow to investigate the history and context of the Fagel Collection.

Concluding Thanks

The Library of Trinity College Dublin and the KB National Library of the Netherlands are grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands for their foresight in supporting this major enabling project to "Unlock" the Fagel Collection – a treasure of our shared cultural heritage.

Particular and specific thanks are due to:

- Peter Kok, the late Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ireland (2017 2018)
- Adriaan Palm, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ireland (2019 – 2023)
- Yaron Oppenheimer, Deputy Head of Mission, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Ireland (2019 – 2023)
- Kevin Kelly, Ambassador of Ireland to the Netherlands (2016 2021)
- Brendan Rogers, Ambassador of Ireland to the Netherlands (2021 present)
- Sacha Oudolf, Senior Policy Advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

The Unlocking the Fagel Collection Project has been an extremely fruitful and enjoyable collaboration with the colleagues from TCD. As the national library we continuously seek to provide and improve sustainable access to the realm of printed knowledge, to scholars, researchers and anyone asking questions about their history and the world around them. And as a network organization we always look for collaborations with institutions and individuals aiming at similar goals, both inside and outside the Netherlands. Thanks to the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an important piece of our national printed heritage has now become available for further research and public use. The KB is looking forward to continuing the collaboration with TCD in 'unlocking' our shared cultural heritage.

Geertrui Verbraak, Member of the Board of Directors with Sustainable Access portfolio, KB National Library of the Netherlands

Project Output

The Fagel Collection Project webpage

CATALOGUE RECORDS

- Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands
- Library of Trinity College Dublin

MEDIA

- 'One of the world's most valuable book collections to go on public display at Trinity College Dublin' Irish Times 20 June 2023
- 'Fagel Collection's Rare Books, Pamphlets and Maps Go On Public Display' Fine Books & Collections Magazine 22 June 2023

PROJECT VIDEO SERIES

- De Fagelcollectie in Trinity College Dublin (20 videos) KB YouTube Playlist
- The Fagels (10 videos) Library of Trinity College Dublin YouTube Playlist
- Unlocking the Fagel Collection (10 videos) Library of Trinity College Dublin YouTube Playlist

PRINT PUBLICATIONS

- Alsemgeest, Alex, 'De Fagelcollectie', De Boekenwereld 36:1 (2020), pp. 56-61.
- Alsemgeest, Alex, 'De grenzeloze Fagelcollectie. Het begin en einde van de particuliere bibliotheek van een ambtsdrager', in Oude boeken, nieuwe podia. Liber amicorum voor Marieke van Delft. Old books, new platforms (Tielt: Lannoo, 2021), pp. 17-23.
- Nankivell, Joe, 'Enkele bijzondere vondsten in de Fagelcollectie', De Boekenwereld 39:2 (2023), pp. 76-79.
- Verhoeven, Garrelt, 'Een Hollandse bibliotheek in Dublin. De Fagel collectie in Trinity College Library', Vind (2023), p. 44-51.

RESEARCH BLOGS

2021

- Alsemgeest, Alex,
 - An edition of Divina Commedia in the Fagel Collection
 - Gems of the Fagel Collection: Athanasius Kircher's Mundus subterraneus 1678
 - The Keys to the Fagel Treasury

- Anchisi, Angelica, Hidden Treatments or "what lies beneath"
- Bayne, Olivia, Farcical Fountains in the Fagel collection
- Cooper, Anita, Gems of the Fagel Collection: La Géométrie Pratique 1702
- Flood, Niamh, The Fagel French Garden Connection

2022

- Monty, Emily, Loose Book Illustrations in the Fagel Map Portfolios
- Nankivell, Joe, 'The most lamentable burning of the cittie of Corke': a view on Irish history from a Dutch Collection

2023

- Coulton, Jenny, Marking Books and Bookmarks: Evidence of Provenance and Use in the Fagel Collection
- Mattern, Emily, On Display. The Fagel Family's Copy of Maria Sibylla Merian's 'Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium' (1719)
- Monty, Emily, Used Books? Tracing the History of Ownership in the Fagel Collection
- Van Gelder, Esther, Verslag symposium over de Fagel-collectie



A reader consulting an atlas from the Fagel Collection

PRESENTATIONS

2021

- Alsemgeest, Alex, Lucinda Jones & Laura Shanahan, 'King's Day Fagel Collection Webinar', Embassy of the Netherlands in Ireland [online].
- Gelder, Esther van, Lucinda Jones & Laura Shanahan, 'Safeguarding shared heritage. Project Unlocking the Fagel Collection', National Libraries Now, [online].

2022

- Gelder, Esther van, 'The Fagel Collection. The largest 18th century Dutch private library abroad', The Fagel Collection – A KB-Trinity College Collaboration, The Hague.
- Hansen, Ann-Marie,
 - À la découverte de la collection Fagel, ou l'Europe des XVII-XVIIIe siècles en 32,000 imprimés', research seminar, École nationale supérieure des sciences de l'information et des bibliothèques, Lyon [online].
 - 'Traces de lecteurs dans la collection Fagel', research seminar, Radboud University, Nijmegen [online].
 - 'Preparing to digitise the Fagel Pamphlet Collection', Sammelband 15-16 Workshop, Utrecht.
- Hansen, Ann-Marie & Esther van Gelder,
 - 'Two of a kind? Comparing the Fagel and De Geer Dutch book collections through the STCN', Library of Leufstabruk Symposium, Uppsala, Sweden.
 - *'Unlocking the Fagel Library. First results of an international cooperation around the largest 18th-century Dutch private library abroad'*, Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing, Amsterdam.
- Hansen, Ann-Marie, Kasper Kop, Maria Elisa Navarro Morales Malcolm Walsby & Arthur der Weduwen, 'Unlocking the Fagel Collection: A Dutch Library in Dublin', Roundtable, Congress of the Renaissance Society of America, Dublin.
- Hansen, Ann-Marie & Joe Nankivell, 'Unlocking the Fagel Collection: From 1802 to 2022 and beyond', Consortium of National and University Libraries of Ireland, Limerick.
- Monty, Emily, 'Colonial Collecting: Mapping the Americas in the Fagel Collection at TCD', Trinity Centre for Early Modern History Seminar.
- Monty, Emily & Ann-Marie Hansen, 'Fellow in Focus: In Conversation', Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Institute.

2023

- Alsemgeest, Alex, 'The Fagel Collection and the Narrative of Objects', Fagel Symposium.
- Gelder, Esther van, & Erik Geleijns, 'The library landscape of eighteenth-century The Hague', Fagel Symposium.
- Gent, Rob van, 'Astronomy and the Astral Sciences in the Fagel Collection', Fagel Symposium.
- Goedings, Truusje, 'Colours in context: the illuminated copies in the Fagel library', Fagel Symposium.
- Hansen, Ann-Marie,
 - 'Assessing the Dutch (and Dutch-language) imprints in the Fagel Collection', Fagel Symposium.
 - *'Unlocking the Fagel Collection. A Dutch 18th-century Library in Dublin'*, Library Association of Ireland's Rare Books Group General Assembly Lecture [online].
 - *Curator's Talk: Unlocking the Fagel Collection'* Heritage Week Lunchtime Talk, Library of Trinity College Dublin.
- Hansen, Ann-Marie, Claire McNulty & Joe Nankivell, 'Quick Picks: Favourites from Trinity Library', Trinity Arts and Humanities Research Festival.

- Helmers, Helmer, 'Lessons Learned. The Fagels as International Propaganda Masters', Fagel Symposium.
- Kop, Kasper, 'Reimagining the Dutch borderlands: State formation in eighteenth-century Europe, 1713-1763', Fagel Symposium.
- Megaw, Andrew, & Laura O'Farrell, 'Judging books by their covers; bookbinding structures in the Fagel collection', Fagel Symposium.
- Monty, Emily,
 - 'Prints and Books in the Dutch Fagel Collection: Continuity and Disjuncture on the London Market around 1800', The Mutability of Collections conference, Institute of Historical Research, University of London.
 - 'Seeing Prints and Drawings in the Fagel Library: Philipp von Stosch, François Fagel, and the Atlas beyond Cartography', Fagel Symposium.
- Nankivell, Joe, 'The Fagel Library Space: The Picture From the Nineteenth-century Metadata', Fagel Symposium.
- Nankivell, Joe & Ann-Marie Hansen, 'Unlocking the Fagel Collection with the STCN', 40 jaar STCN, The Hague.
- Navarro Morales, Maria Elisa, 'Is There a Way to Reconstruct a Building That is No Longer There through the Objects It Housed?' Agora II: (Un)common Precedents, Carleton School of Architecture, Ottawa, Canada. [online]
- Oddens, Joris, 'A Dynasty of Gatekeepers: The Fagels as greffiers of the States General', Fagel Symposium.
- Schaik, Anne-Rieke van, Marissa Griffioen & Bram Vannieuwehuyze, 'Putting the Fagel River Maps back into Context', Fagel Symposium.
- Sjökvist, Peter, 'Suecana in the Fagel- and Leufsta-Collections', Fagel Symposium.

TEACHING

Undergraduate

- Architecture Beyond the Canon (History of Art and Architecture)
- A World to Discover Travel Memoirs and Memorabilia at Trinity (Interdisciplinary Elective)
- Europe, 1500-1800 (History)

Masters

- Empires of the Early Modern World (History)
- Research Methods (History of Art and Architecture)

Research undertaken by graduate students

- Kop, Kasper (expected in 2024). Reimagining the Dutch borderlands: State formation in eighteenth-century Europe, 1713-1763. PhD Dissertation, Trinity College Dublin.
- Mattern, Emily (2022). Materiality, Meaning, and Metamorphosis: The Work of Maria Sibylla Merian in the Fagel Collection at Trinity College Dublin. Master thesis, Trinity College Dublin.



Three works of poetry and song in decorative paper wrappers from the late Eighteenth-century (Fag.N.16.32 no.4–6)



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