

16th Cent. Gujarati Navigation (2) : From Diu to Malacca and beyond (Portuguese and Indian Sources)

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This short paper intends to complete a previous paper presented for the 6th CAAS (Hankuk University, Seoul) and partly published this year in the Proceedings. Based on previous findings (Désoulières 2015 and 2016) we intend to describe peculiar aspects of 16th Cent. Gujarati navigation and trade from the key port of Diu (Gujarat Peninsula, NW coast of India) to Malacca (Malaysia). Indeed the port of Malacca, under the domination of the Muslim Sultan, was a very important commercial relay between, to say the least, India and China. And the Gujarati traders had a very important position within the Sultanate, and would directly oppose Portuguese intents to establish a trading post. Our full paper (same title) may be referred to for more precise comments and analysis.

A note on Maulana Nadvi's historical work in Urdu (Désoulières 2016, 96-97; Désoulières 2015, 33)

Written in the beginning of 20th Cent. but published much later (mostly posthumous, Nadvi, 1958), Maulānā Nadvī's writings in Urdu are based on Sanskrit sources, Arab, Persian, chronicles, and, last but not least, Gujarati traditional sources (he collaborated with a Gujarati friend and colleague for a long time) and we focus here on Maulānā Sayyad Abu Zafar Nadvi's Nadvi's *Gujarāt kī tamaddanī tārīx : A Cultural History of Gujarat* (written c. 1930). Maulana Nadvi could not consult Chinese sources, for that he would rely on Arab historiography and travel stories in Arabic and also translated in Persian and Urdu (Barros, 16th Cent, had similar sources, through interpreters). An important point should be added here : Maulana Nadvi made a very thorough historical study of the Gujarati ports and navigation, and we would like to quote him here at length on these matters clearly linked with Gujarati and Indian naval trade with the Far East (see below), but his uncle Sayyad Sulaimān Nadvi's work also in Urdu *The Navigation of the Arabs* (Nadvi 1958) must have inspired him (for our complete translated quotations and further comments, refer to our full paper mentioned above).

Nadvi's *Cultural History of Gujarat* is still worth comparing with 16th cent Portuguese writings because they refer to common sources (especially in the case of Barros) with opposed point of view and also because they complete each other, especially when we look

at Portuguese manuscripts included in the *Lendas da India* [*Chronicles of India*] by Correia (writing c. 1540 Vol. III) ; besides it brings new annotations of the Portuguese histories, giving more genuine Indo Persian orthography of proper and indigenous names for old geographical locations. But, more important, it helps in confronting Indian local views of the naval conflict with Portuguese classical and colonial interpretations.

Regarding the Gujarati trade with the Far East (Malacca, Java and China) Maulana Nadvi could not ignore his uncle's works on *Arab Navigation* particularly regarding the commercial networks of the Chinese merchants (and Chinese merchants converted to Islam) linking India, Java and China, especially following the Arab sea faring to Singapore and China (Nadvi 1958, 66-63, 112-113).

Quoting Maulana Nadvi's *Cultural History of Gujarāt or Tamaddanī Tārīkh* (p.17 onwards, re my full English translation in my 2016 full paper, here we are giving summary/extracts :

The (Gujarati) Sailing Fleet (introduction) : *The High seas Fleet of Gujarāt* (Nadvi 1958, 265 sqq)

The geographical position of Gujarāt [Gujarat]: [...] Note : refer to Map n° 1]

The ancient ports of Gujarat [p 184] :

Ports of the Muslim Era [p 191]:

The Administration of the Ports (ibid., pp 186-188) :

The Navigation of the Gujarati people

“The Chinese traveller Huang Tswang [Xuanzang] writes that he saw also « hindus » settled in the towns of Iran and « these Jāt work as experienced pilots [mu'allim] on the ships traveling between Iran and Gujarat ».

In the ninth century AD the Gujarati became so strong that they became the rulers of Java, which explains why the [Javanese] civilisation was closer to hindu civilisation and culture than to the neighboring Chinese culture, consequently the Rajas of that country had the title of Maha Rajas, a fact also recorded in the travel books of Arab navigators. That is the reason why the Javanese coinage was also circulating in Gujarat which is called *tātariya* [tātariyya / stater ?]. Arab travelers also wrote that the Gupta [gupt] coinage was circulating in Madagascar and that the traders of Madagascar understood the language of Java. The Arab travellers recorded that Hindus would come to Basra and Siraf [Sīrāf, Iran] but this people would not meet and eat together, although they number more than a hundred.”

Maritime Centres [term defined in the last para]

The Gujarati fleets during the Islamic Era

“Sultān Muhammad the First and Sultān Qutub ud Dīn did not have any spare time to engage in maritime ventures, but Sultan Mahmūd Begarā the First took a special interest in those matters and the arrival of some Turkish amīr al bahar (admiral) give him even more incentive and because of him the Gujarati naval fleet became very strong and protected the borders from the sea-shores of Sindh to the port of Ḍābhūl [160 km south of Mumbai]. Mahmūd armed his vessels with artillery thus equipping them according to the Turkish method.

In 896 H/ 1490 ... Bahādur Gilānī took advantage of the weakness of the ... Sultanate and took possession of the coastal areas, and having equipped a naval fleet he set on pirating the sea and ... came to the Gujarati ports and started to sack and lay waste ... Sultān Mahmūd was informed of the situation so he sent a navy fleet of three hundred ships armed with cannons to attack the port of Dābhūl From that fact we can figure what was the strength of the naval fleet of Sultān Mahmūd, he had a special experience of the seas and had a great knowledge of ships.

In 913 H / 1507 AD Sultān Mahmūd learnt that the Portuguese had arrived in great numbers and wanted to occupy a site somewhere on the coast [the sea port of Diu] to build a fort and he ordered his amīr al bahar (admiral) Malik Ayāz to wage war against them and taking ships from Diu, Daman and Māhim to confront them, the amīr set sail.”p.194

Chinese Porcelain Trade from Diu (according to Barros 1533)

Regarding the wealth and importance of Diu as a port and trade with China via Java and Malacca for porcelain (and silk) trade a curious passage of Barros is worth quoting :

We quote here a significant passage which I translate from the reprint of original Chapter V of the *Segunda Década* dealing with negotiations between Alfonso D’Albuquerque and the Gujarati Shah Bandar Malik Ayaz in August 1513 describing a kind of reciprocal gunboat diplomacy (Barros 1553 and 1974 (reprint), 377-378) , paragraph and punctuation are mine :

“[D’Albuquerque was hoping to have a foot in the city through trade and a factor that he left in the city and also hoping to convince the King through his ally Malik Gopi, to let him have a (colonial) factory and a fortress built in Diu] ... [a negotiation is taking place] Malik Ayaz [... the *shah bandar*/Captain of the Port] who was working against the interest of the King of Cambay (as we shall see now), on his own initiative let D’Albuquerque know that he was above all willing that the King of Portugal should have a factory in Diu and that he would agree to concede a place for that purpose but he was afraid that the

King of Gujarat would not agree ...

So he would show the greatness of his status with this manner : he came out with a fleet of up to a hundred of rowing ships, all of them so much provided with vessels [louçainha/precious and expensive pottery] just like they would go for a wedding but also so much equipped with artillery, munitions and arms just like they had to fight. When D'Albuquerque came to know through a *fusta* that he had sent ahead, how [Malik Ayaz] was coming to meet him, he came back to his encounter to receive him with the whole of his naval fleet and the embraces that took place from one party and the other were from all the pieces of artillery that every party had brought.”

Our comment : from this passage from Barros' *Second Decade* we can deduce a few things especially if we compare it with the historical affirmations brought by Nadvi :

- Barros gives the building of a *factory with a fortress* at Diu as the main aim of Albuquerque's negotiations, in fact the Portuguese were desperate for controlling inter Indian trade and Far East Indian trade largely in the hands of the Gujarati (Hindus and Muslims alike) : these 1510-1513 years were difficult times for the Portuguese : they were realising that the Gujarati rich and fine clothes and other refined goods such as special paper were the only buying power in Malacca for clove, Chinese silk and porcelain goods (Nadvi has a long chapter on Gujarati industries like High quality silk and cotton clothes, and paper, probably linked with Chinese techniques) and Chinese trade in and through India was still in the hand of Muslim Chinese collaborating with Arabs and Indians.

- Finally when Barros with some irony says that Malik Ayaz fleet was looking like a *wedding party* because it was loaded with *louçainha* [refined and costly potteries] to go and meet Albuquerque's armada for negotiations, and the wedding metaphor subtly goes on with the term *embraces* one wonders if besides the necessary show of force (the ships were also over loaded with weapons and artillery) if Malik Ayaz would provoke and seduce the Portuguese with Chinese porcelain (*louçainha*) that they were not able to trade from Malacca and beyond (contrary to the Dutch in the following century). And Barros adds that [...] Malik Ayaz used to give many *pieces* as good will present to the Portuguese captains, *doubling the presents in consideration with the degree of nobility*. Could it be that Malik Ayaz was making commercial offers from his Diu emporium ?

Indeed the Gujarati and Indian involvement with Javanese and Chinese trade was very old as reminded by Nadvi who quotes Greek and Roman sources as he comments the early dominating position of the Indians and Gujarati in Java and China trade : *In the ninth century AD the Gujarati became so strong that they became the rulers of Java, which explains why the*

[Javanese] civilisation was closer to Hindu civilisation and culture than to the neighbouring Chinese culture, consequently the Rajas of that country had the title of Maha Rajas, a fact also recorded in the travel books of Arab navigators. That is the reason why the Javanese coinage was also circulating in Gujarat which is called tātariya [tātariyya / stater ?]. Arab travellers also wrote [in 9th Cent AD] that the Gupta [Gupt, c.320-547 AD] coinage was circulating in Madagascar and that the traders of Madagascar understood the language of Java.

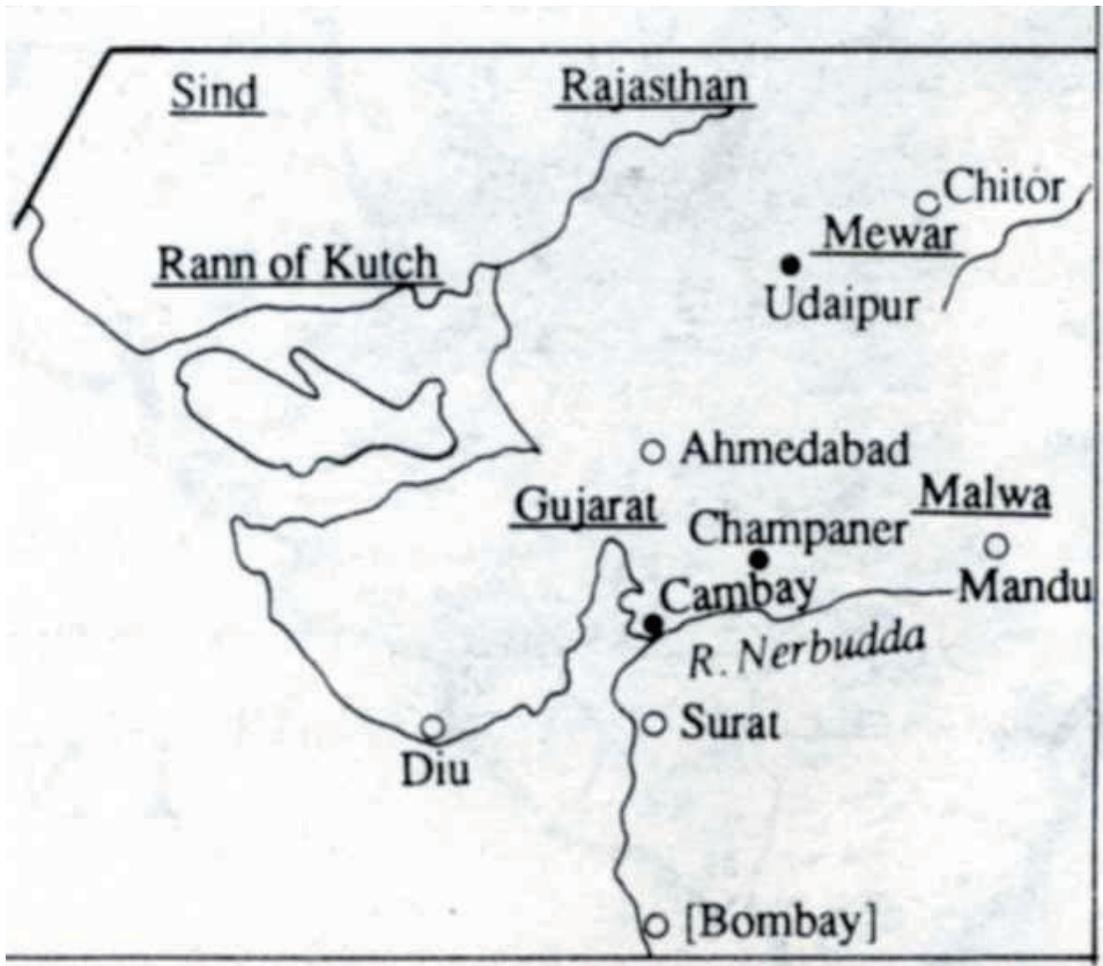
Another important point that can be deduced from Nadvi's lengthy historical description of *The Gujarati navigation* and the *Gujarati naval fleets* is that the late 14th century and the early decade of the 16th century saw the apex of Gujarati inter Indian and Sino Indian navigation and trade through Java (Malacca) succeeding the Arabs and the Persians though not putting them out the game.

Portuguese text translated in English from Livro Sexto da Segunda Decada Da Asia de João de Barros, about the people of Java and Malacca (Barros 1553, 257-258) :

“About trading goods they are very expert and ingenious people for their profit : there [in Malacca] they commonly treat with these nations : Javanese, Siamese, Pegu [Burmese] Bengalis, Queljis [Malays], Malabars [South Indians from Malabar Coast], Gujaratis, Parsis [Persians], Arabs and many other nations that are defined by their many languages because they reside there and the city is populated by the big ships [náos] who converge in the city where also Chinese, Lequios [Japanese] Luções [Philippine] and others from the Far East, all of them bringing such a big wealth, oriental and occidental, that it was looking like a centre where all kinds of natural goods created by the Earth and the artificial ones from the ingenuity of men were converging, in such a way that the land [around the city] itself being sterile was better supplied than the very regions supplying the goods thanks to the exchange that was done there.... That importance of the trade lasted for a long time till our entry into India, because the Arab Moors, Persians [/ Parsis] and Gujaratis fearing our armadas [naval fleets]”

That text by Barros (my translation) tallies with Nadvi's history of Gujarati navigation and trade to the Far East through Malacca and (indirectly) mentions the Arab and Persian navigation merging with the Gujarati navigation and trade to the East threatened by the coming of the Portuguese.

Map 2. Map Gujarat from Désoulières (1988)



Original Portuguese text João de Barros, Livro Sexto da Segunda Decada Da Asia, about the people of Java and Malacca (Barros 1553, 257-258) :

Acerca da mercadoria é gente muy experta e arteficiosa pera seu proveito: cá ordinariamente tractam cõ estas nações Jáos, Syames, Peguus, Bengálas, Quelijs, Malabáres, Guzarátes, Párseos, Arábios, e outras muytas nações que os tẽ feito muy fagêzes por aly residir e a cidade ser populosa cõ as náos q̃ concórrẽ a ella em que tambem foem vir os pouos Chijs, Lequios, Luções, e outros daquelle oriẽte trazẽdo todos tanta riquêza oriental e occidental que parecia hum centro a que concorria todo o natural que a tẽrra criáua e arteficial da mechanic dos hómẽes, de maneira que sendo a tẽrra em sy esterelle, per a cõmutaçam que se aly fazia era mais abastada de todas que as próprias rigiões donde ellas vinham. E posto que aly auia grãde cópia de todollos metáes assy como ouro de Camáttra sua vezinha, estãho da mesma tẽrra, prata de Syam, cóbre da China, e ferro de muytas pãrtes derredor della, por tudo se aly ajuntar em módo de mercadoria, e muytos em levar qualquey coufa destas por a nam auer em sua tẽrra ganháua regularmente a trinta e quorenta por cento: ante faziam seu emprego em espeçearia, drogaria, aromatica, cheiros, seda e mil gêneros de policias por ganharem dobrado. A qual grossura do trácto durou muy corrente tẽ a nõssa entrada na India, que os mouros Arabios, Párseos e Guzarátes temendo nõssas armá

First page of Nadvi's chapter : The Naval Fleet of Gujarat, (Urdu) (Nadvi 1958.2, 184)

گجرات کا بحری بیڑہ

گجرات کی جغرافیائی حیثیت | ہندوستان کے جنوب مغرب کا حصہ ملک قدرتی طور پر ایسا واقع ہوا ہے کہ اس کو بحیرہ عرب گھیرے ہوئے ہے، اس کے سامنے عمان ہے، اس کے دائیں خلیج فارس اور اس کے بائیں خلیج عدن ہے، عدن یمن کی پرانی بندرگاہ ہے حضرت موسیٰ کے سامنے واقع ہے اور بحرین خلیج فارس کا بحری مرکز ہے، ان طبعی حالات کے سبب سے گجرات کا عرب کے ساتھ میل جول ایک قدرتی بات ہے، گجرات سے سندھ کا راستہ بھی کھلتا تھا اور جہاز یہاں سے سندھ کی پرانی بندرگاہ دیول جاتے تھے، اسی طرح بری اور بحری دونوں سے دکن کا راستہ بھی کھلتا تھا، مشرق میں مارواڑ، مالوہ، خاندیس وغیرہ کا راستہ خشکی کا تھا اور اس پر کاروان تجارت برابر آتے جاتے تھے، الغرض گجرات کے ایک طرف سمندر اور دوسری طرف خشکی ہونے کے باعث اس کی جغرافیائی حیثیت بہت اچھی تھی، یورپ، مصر، عرب، شام، عراق و ایران کے جہازوں کی آمد و رفت کثرت سے تھی، لنگا، مدراس، بنگال، آسام، برما، اور چین جانے والے جہاز گجرات کے کسی نہ کسی بندرگاہ پر ضرور ٹھہرتے تھے، گجرات کی خوش حالی اور ثروت کا سبب درحقیقت شروعاتی سے یہی تھا۔

گجرات کی قدیم بندرگاہیں | گجرات کی قدیم بندرگاہیں، کون کون تھیں، ان کا صحیح صحیح حال معلوم کرنا مشکل ہے، ہندوستان کی قدیم تاریخ تاریکی میں ہے، اسلامی عہد میں جو بندرگاہیں جاری تھیں، ان کو درج کیا جاتا ہے، رومی اور یونانی تاریخوں سے جن بندرگاہوں کا پتہ چل سکا ہے، ان کو بھی اس میں شامل کر دیا گیا ہے، مثلاً دوارکا، سوسناتھ، کچھ، کھنبارت، دلہی پور (گوگھ) دھولیہرا (دھندھو کا) بھروچ، رورکھ، گندہار، چیمور، سوپارہ، تھانہ، بعض لوگوں نے اس میں مندرجہ ذیل ناموں کا بھی اضافہ کیا ہے، نوساری، ملی سورا، کھیم، پور بندر، مانگرول، حسب

2nd page of Nadvi's chapter : The Naval Fleet of Gujarat, (Urdu) (Nadvi 1958.2, 184)

سورپہ پور، گندوی، گوپ، ماتھ، مہوہ (۱)۔

اسلامی عہد کی بندرگاہیں | جیسا کہ اوپر لکھا گیا ہے کہ گجرات، ٹھیک عرب کے بالتقابل واقع ہے، چونکہ اس زمانہ میں عربوں کا عروج تھا، اس لئے ان کے جہاز چین تک تجارتی مال لے کر جاتے تھے اور مختلف اغراض کی بنا پر ان کو گجراتی بندرگاہوں پر ٹھہرنا پڑتا تھا، ایک تو تجارتی مال کے خرید و فروخت کے لئے دوسرے سامان رسد اور بیٹھے پانی کے لینے کے لئے۔

جب گجرات میں اسلامی حکومت قائم ہو گئی اور وہاں کے خود مختار سلاطین نے گجرات کو ترقی دینے کی کوشش کی، تو گجرات اور کاتھیاواڑ میں بہت سی بندرگاہیں کھل گئیں، چنانچہ مرآة سکندری، مرآة احمدی اور ظفر الوالہ میں یہ تشریح لکھا ہے کہ سلاطین گجرات کے عہد میں ۸۳ بندرگاہیں تھیں (۲) لیکن مجھے ان ۸۳ بندرگاہوں کے نام نہیں مل سکے، لیکن تلاش و تھمن سے میں جس قدر معلوم کر سکا، وہ درج ذیل ہیں۔

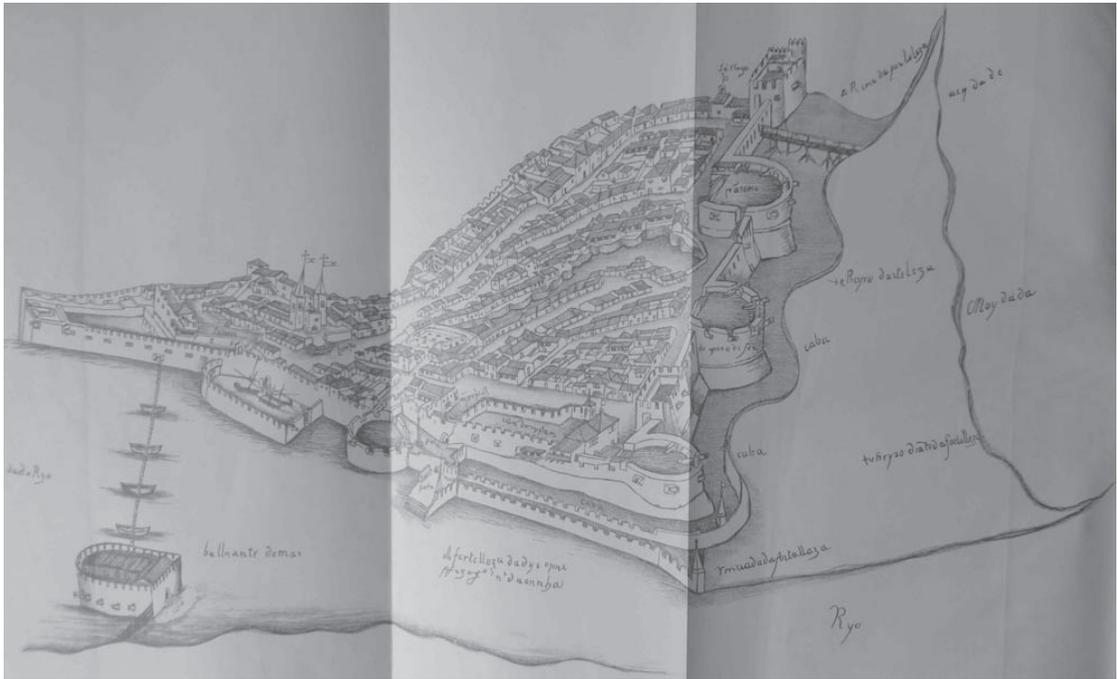
گجرات تین حصوں میں منقسم ہے، خاص گجرات، کاتھیاواڑ (سورٹھ) اور کچھ، چنانچہ کچھ کی بندرگاہیں، یہ تھیں، لکھ پت، مانڈوی، مدر، جکھو، کنڈالا، ٹونا اور کاتھیاواڑ کی بندرگاہیں مندرجہ ذیل ہیں (۳)۔

نوکھی (سوربی) چوڈیا، بیڈی، (جام نگر) سلا یا، اوکھا (دوارکا) پور بندر، نوی بندر، مادھپور، منگروں، جورواڑ، ویراول، سومناٹھ، کوڑی نار، دی، جعفر آباد، مہو، بھاڈنگر، دھولیرا، دھبی پور، گھوگھ، نو انگر (متصل دیو) گانف، متصل (دھندھو کا) جھون جھون واڑ۔

گجرات کے متعلق حسب ذیل بندرگاہیں تھیں (۴) کھنہایت، (پرم) بھروچ، بھاڑ بھوت، گندھار، انکلیشور، ہانسوٹ، سورت، راندیر، ڈوس، نوساری، گندوی، ونساڑ، دمن، ٹنکار، دے بیج، وی گاؤں کاوی، سنجان، ملی مور (متصل گندوی) بچے مور (متصل بسینی)

(۱) گجرات نوہاں ڈوس ۲ گجراتی۔ (۲) ظفر الوالہ جلد اول ص ۲۳۳۔ (۳) گجرات نوہاں ڈوس ۲ گجراتی۔ (۴) میرے رفیق کارڈاکلر چھو بھائی تاکہ ایما سے جس سے ساتھ میریج درک کرتے ہیں، ان کا میں ٹھکانہ نہیں کرتا۔

Map of Diu (Correia 1540)



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