A SPHERO-CONICAL VESSEL AS FUQQĀ'CA, OR A GOURD FOR “BEER”

A common type of Islamic earthenware found in various public and private collections is a small vessel, usually spherical or spherico-conical (turunj) in shape with a short neck and a small spout. Averaging 15 cm. in height and 12 cm. in diameter, these small containers can hold about 220 cc. of liquid. Several larger examples have also been discovered (fig. 1, center), in addition to a group that are zoomorphic in shape, resembling fish or birds. The thickness of the vessels’ body is generally more than 1 cm., and as this is not in proportion to their height it results in their surprisingly heavy weight. Some of the vessels are plain but most are embellished with incised and stamped patterns and molds that can be quite rich and elaborate (fig. 1, right, and fig. 8). A few are even glazed. In certain instances, the gourds are inscribed with the name of the potter or the owner or some other phrase such as the bismillah or good wishes (figs. 3–6, 9–11, 17–22, 23–27).

An abundance of these spherico-conical vessels have been found in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and the ex-Soviet Union. In Iran, examples have been excavated at Susa, Khurramabad, Takht-i Sulayman, Hamadan, Aligudarz, Sultaniyah, Ray, Old Gurgan (now Gunbad-i Qabus), Sabzavar, Nishapur, and Buzjan among other sites. They are datable to between the tenth and the thirteenth century, except for the group found at Sultaniyah, which has been attributed to the fourteenth century.

1. FUNCTIONS PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED FOR THE SPHERO-CONICAL VESSELS

The exact function of these wares has puzzled scholars for well over a hundred years. Several hypotheses have been put forth: some have claimed that they contained mercury; others have maintained that they may have served as hand grenades during battle. Certain scholars have also proposed that the vessels acted as aeolipiles or fire blowers. Finally, it has been suggested that they contained liquids such as wine and perfume or that at least some were intended as alchemical vessels.

None of these hypotheses, however, fully explains the function of these particular vessels. For instance, their number is far too great to warrant their use as containers of mercury: sixty examples alone have been found in a single room in Tripoli; in 1914, one hundred vessels were known to be in the Kazan Museum and twenty-three more are now in the Archaeological Museum in Tehran. Mercury was far too rare a substance to fill all of these hundreds of jars, given that many of them have not yet been discovered. Nevertheless, the Bayān al-Šāra‘at, a thirteenth-century text, claims that identical vessels in glass were used for the preparation of cinnabar (shanggar). The author, Abu al-Fadl Hubaysh al-Tiflisi, prescribes the following: “Take a thick spherico-conical (turunj) glass vessel, meaning [a vessel] with a narrow base and a narrow neck like the kuza-yi fuqā’ [beer gourd]. Fill this with mercury and add one-fourth yellow sulphur (chahār yikh gūrd-i zar).” This passage, in support of Professor Ettinghausen’s thesis, suggests that the vessels used for mercury in one way or another resembled the kuza-yi fuqā’, the spherico-conical beer gourd, but it does not imply that all such vessels were used for this purpose alone.

Henri Seyrig and Ettinghausen have argued convincingly against the use of the vessels as hand grenades. One can also add textual evidence to their technical observations. Several medieval sources refer to the existence of grenade-like ignifugeous objects that were known as either qawārī (plural: qawārīr), or naffāta. In Le feu Grégois, M. Mercier has cited several phrases containing these terms, most of them qawārīr. The author thinks that qawārīr were hand grenades made of glass and associates copper with the term naffāta, but his conclusion that spherico-conical vessels in clay also served as grenades and grenade à pulvérim finds no support in the historical sources. These texts are quite specific in their description of medieval hand grenades: if called qawārīr, the grenades were made out of glass and if known as naffāta, they were in copper. According to a legend, however, in one instance spherico-conical vessels were
used as flying bombs, but instead of filling them with explosives, they were packed with deadly scorpions.\textsuperscript{27}

Ettinghausen also questioned the role of spherico-conical vessels as aeolipiles.\textsuperscript{28} When referring to W. L. Hildburgh’s comments,\textsuperscript{29} he remarked that, with one exception, all the extant European and Himalayan fire blowers and those known from western sources are made of metal. Moreover, few of the vessels under consideration have any soot marks or show any other signs of having been near a fire.\textsuperscript{30} The discovery of glazed examples as well as the group discussed below also contradict the use of these objects as fire blowers.\textsuperscript{31} Even Hildburgh, who first proposed the role of these jars as aeolipiles, wrote that, “their use [as fire blowers] was far from general and was perhaps confined principally to scientific demonstrations and possibly operations and if they appeared in the household it was as playthings rather than to serve practical needs.”\textsuperscript{32}

It is curious that none of the vessels were found — as one would expect of aeolipiles — in fireplaces or furnaces of private dwellings. Only very few have been discovered in situ in kilns, as in the French excavations at Balis (Bki Meskne) on the Euphrates. But even there, scholars have given different explanations for their presence. In 1973, when Michael Rogers visited Balis, where a series of kilns had just been uncovered, he observed “at the bottom of one of them three or four of these vessels held together by a strip of clay round their necks, a clear indication that they were being used in the kiln not that the kiln was being used for firing them.”\textsuperscript{33} Marthe Bernus-Taylor, who was in charge of the ceramic finds on the excavation, is of a different opinion. Although she noticed from three to five spherico-conical jars stuck together in a large open dish (roughly 30 cm. in diameter), she believes that the vessels were originally not attached to each other and that this formation probably resulted from excess heat during firing.\textsuperscript{34}

Finally, no known Persian or Arabic source refers to
the use of these vessels as fire blowers, and the word "aeolipile" appears to have no Persian or Arabic equivalent. It should be noted, however, that since the writings of Hero of Alexandria (3rd century B.C.), which describe aeolipiles, were at least partially translated into Arabic in the mid ninth century, a comparative study of the texts may yield the Arabic term for aeolipiles and permit further research in this direction.

These observations suggest that the use of spherico-conical vessels as aeolipiles is, for the time being, not convincing. As Rogers himself has pointed out (and as will be illustrated at the end of this article), these jars lent themselves to a variety of functions, depending on their material, size, particular shape, and date. Nevertheless, new evidence seems to indicate that these earthenware vessels with their thick body, narrow opening, and short neck, often marked with grooves, were initially designed for a specific use, namely to serve as gourds for beer or _fuqqā_ (kuza- _yi_ _fuqqā_).

**2. THE SPHERO-CONICAL VESSEL AS _FUQQĀ_ OR A GOURD FOR BEER**

Some of the basic elements for identifying spherico-conical vessels as beer gourds, such as the term _fuqqā_ and, most important, a good-wishes inscription that appears on some of the examples, are already known, but in general they have been either ignored or misinterpreted. Consequently, no attempt has been made to consider the direct correlation between the particular inscription and the word _fuqqā_ and thus to understand the function of the vessels in question.

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2.1. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence. This highly significant inscription in Kufic, originally found on a waster from Oren Qal'a (old Baylaqan) in the southern part of the Azerbaycan Republic, reads _Ishrab haniyyan_ ("Drink to your good health"). It was published as early as 1959 by L. T. Gjuzalyjan, but failed to attract much attention. The Oren Qal'a waster is not the only example that bears this inscription, for the same phrase and the name of the potter appear on two other unpublished vessels from Iran (figs. 2–6, 9–11). The large inscription, which encircles the shoulder of both vessels, states, _Ishrab haniyyan barakatun 'amalu Hamshād_ ("Drink to your good health, divine grace, made by Hamshād").

Quasi-identical inscriptions also figure on two of three gourds deposited in the Iran Bastan Museum in the early spring of 1990 (figs. 14–27). Originally there must have been more inscribed containers, but our investigations have, at least for the time being, come to a dead end because we completely lost track of the man who supposedly discovered these vessels at Ray. He had called at the
museum with the three gourds on or about 20 April 1990 wondering what they were for. When asked how he came to be in possession of these vessels, he replied that, upon the recommendation of a broadcast by the Iranian Government during the Iraqi missile attacks on Tehran in 1988, he and his mother had started to dig a shelter in the garden of their house in Dawlatabad situated between Old Rayy and southern Tehran. While doing so, they unearthed about eighty gourds and, in the hope that these vessels might contain gold, they broke all but three of them. Disappointed, the son got rid of the broken pieces by throwing them in a nearby watercourse and took the three remaining items to the museum. He was asked to come back the next day for an answer to his queries, but, perhaps feeling apprehensive, he never showed up. The story may be taken at its face value, although perhaps the man did not start to excavate in 1988 because he wished to build a shelter, but rather in 1989, motivated by the fact that a hoard of thirty-four or thirty-five gold coins from the Abbasid period had been found.
precisely in Dawlatabad where he allegedly lives. It seems unlikely that the mother and son were stupid enough to break nearly all the vessels to see whether they contained gold. There were other means to find out. We tend to believe that they sold at least some of their findings, and perhaps the two items mentioned in the preceding paragraph come from the same spot (figs. 2–6, 9–11). The place might have been a tavern, a fuqa dealer’s store, or a kiln and depot. The last hypothesis, suggested by the great number of vessels discovered and by the fact that one container which is quite deformed might be considered as a waster, is not necessarily the most plausible one (figs. 14, 15). It is true that Dawlatabad has always been a village but, as will be shown below, people were drinking a great amount of fuqa and therefore any dealer might

Fig. 8. Beer gourd attributed to Iran, pre-Mongol period (see fig. 2, second from right).

Fig. 9. Beer gourd on far right in fig. 2, purchased in Isfahan but attributed to Rayy, Buyid period, tenth–early eleventh century. Detail of Kufic inscription ishrab hanīyyan (“drink to your good health”).

Fig. 10. View from above of Kufic inscription on the vessel in fig. 9. Like figs. 2–6, it is inscribed ishrab hanīyyan baraka ʿamalu Hamshād (“drink to your good health, divine grace, made by Hamshād”).

Fig. 11. Potter’s signature on the vessel seen in figs. 9–10: ʿamalu Hamshād (“made by Hamshād”).
easily have stored eighty or more gourds. As for the
deformed piece, it is not necessarily a true water: con-
sidering the fact that these gourds could not be used
more than a few times before they started smelling and
had to be discarded, it may safely be assumed that poor
people in particular would have no aesthetic qualms
about drinking from a deformed vessel as long as it was
still usable.

The inscriptions on the two other vessels prove once
more that they contained a beverage. The one on figs.
14, 17–22, reads Barakatun li-šahibihi ʾishrab ʿamalu Ham-
shādā (“Divine grace to its owner, drink, made by
Hamshād”). “ʾIbrāhīm,” the owner’s name, was carved
on the container after firing. The potter is the same as
the man who signed the two other gourds mentioned
above. The name “Hamshād,” although rare, is never-
thless attested, for instance in Dehkudā’s Lughatnāma
under ʿAli, where the author refers to a certain ʿAli b.
Hamshād b. Sakhātuya (pronounced Sakhtwayh in Ara-
bic). The final alif in “Hamshādā” may be considered as
the first letter of an unfinished repetition of the word ʾish-
rab (drink), or just as a vocative. As for the other con-
tainer (figs. 23–27), it is inscribed Ḥabr ʾansīyan baraka-
tun ʿamalu Ahmad ibn Musā (“Drink to your good health,
divine grace, made by Ahmad b. Musā”). These contain-
ers probably belong to the Buyid period (tenth–early
eleventh century).

In addition to this epigraphic evidence, R.M. Dzhan-
polajan mentions that two spherico-conical vessels discov-
ered at Dvin contained some grape seeds, and several
of those found at Ani, datable from the second half of
the twelfth century to the early thirteenth century, were
unearthed in a hostel. The inscriptions and Dzhanpolaj-
jan’s findings confirm that contrary to Seyrig’s conclu-
sion, these vessels did not serve exclusively as aeolipiles,
but were indeed designed to hold a beverage such as
fuqāʾ. In view of this evidence, it is also tempting to
reconsider a stucco relief (ca. 730) found by Daniel
Schlumberger in the Umayyad Palace of Qasr al-Hayr al-
Gharbi. It shows a standing female figure holding a ves-
sel, which Ettinghausen regarded as a probable perfume
flask or sprinkler. Since the jar bears a striking resem-
bance to the so-called kūza-yi fuqāʾ, can one perhaps not
consider the stucco relief as the representation of a sāqī,
or cupbearer, displaying a beer gourd?

2.2. Fuqāʾa or kūza-yi fuqāʾ, its meaning in Arabic and Per-
sian. Referring to the term fuqāʾ in Arabic and fuqāʾ
(sometimes fuqāʾ) in Persian, Ettinghausen, relying on
S.D. Goitein’s research on the Geniza documents found
in old Cairo, remarked, “One result of his [Professor
Goitein’s] findings was that the container for the trans-
port of mercury was called ‘fuqāʾa’ and, if our assump-
tions are right, this was apparently the Arabic designa-
tion of the spherico-conical bottle." Although this assumption was basically correct, it still misled Ettinghausen and Goitein. Spherico-conical vessels containing certain liquids (mercury in this case) were indeed called *fuqāʿa*, but in Arabic and Persian the term refers primarily to a container for beer or a similar effervescent drink made from raisins. The vessel was then simply called *fuqāʿa*, *fuqāʿiyyat*, or *kuza al-fuqāʿ* in Arabic and *kuza-yi fuqāʿ* in Persian. The precise nature of the beverage, especially whether it was alcoholic or not, has been open to debate, but beer appears to be an appropriate designation for the drink. In present-day Iran, it is generally believed that *fuqāʿ*, so often mentioned in Persian literature, was not intoxicating, and the drink is identified with the non-alcoholic drink called *māḏ al-shaʿr*. However, in *A Mediterranean Society*, Goitein has included the recipe for a certain "Dāḥi wine." Based on his findings in the Geniza documents, he claimed, "This alcoholic honey wine is the honey sherbet, the *fuqāʿ*, 'which God has permitted [Jews] to drink'". Moreover, since the sixth Fatimid caliph, al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (996–1021), who was also a Shi′ite, expressly prohibited *fuqāʿ* and even honey and raisins, which were used for making alcoholic drinks, the beverage must have had intoxicating properties. The Persian traveler Nasir-i Khusraw Qubadīyani Marvzi, who arrived in Cairo on 7 Safar 439 (3 August 1048), confirms this fact, writing that the inhabitants of the Egyptian capital "did not drink *fuqāʿ* because it was said to be altered" (i.e., fermented).

2.3. Identification of spherico-conical vessels as *kuza-yi fuqāʿ* or *fuqāʿa* as referred to in Persian and Arabic literature; *fuqāʿ*; a social phenomenon. In his monumental encyclopedia, the great Persian scholar, ʿAli-Akbar Dihkhuda dedicated a long passage to *fuqāʿ* which provides much of the information for identifying the *kuza-yi fuqāʿ* with the spherico-conical vessel in question. Dihkhuda writes, "*fuqāʿ* was a type of sparkling drink stored in heavy jars (*kuza-yi sangīn*). The vessel's spout was tightly sealed with a skin, and the *kuza* was left in ice to cool. To drink the beverage, the skin covering the opening was pierced with a nail and the gaseous liquid was swallowed. In the Sunni school, this beverage was not prohibited (*harām*), and even in the years when the month of Ramadan coincided with the summer season, the Sunnis used the drink to break fast."

The inherent qualities of *fuqāʿ* and the physical appearance of the gourd have played an important role in inspiring poetic language and imagination, as references to the vessel and its content can be found in much of classical Persian literature. For instance, *fuqāʿ* is celebrated in an important descriptive poem by the twelfth-century poet Suzani Samarqandi:

- Ramadan is here and the one who breaks fast at sunset, holds food in one hand and *fuqāʿ* in the other.
The fire [thirst] kindled every day by fasting⁵⁴ finds instant relief in the evening in fuqāʾ.

More pleasant than the lips of the beloved for the one who will break fast
Are the lips of that heavy gourd (kuza) filled with fuqāʾ.

For those who fast, the nail piercing the opening of the gourd
Fulfills the desire of their hearts and eyes with fuqāʾ.

To be ready for your table from daytime to sunset
The fuqāʾ sat concealed in crushed ice.

Thanks to your fuqāʾ, I am delivered from the heat of the day
Sucking for a while from the upper lip the escaping fuqāʾ.

If you so order, I will place a grateful kiss on the gourd
As my lips join the skin covered lips of the fuqāʾ’s gourd
[or: as the fuqāʾ joins my lips to the lips of the gourd].

May your envious and malicious look grow weary
Just as the fuqāʾ gushes out of the gourd.

The particular form of the vessel and the nature of fuqāʾ are also the subjects of an enigma-poem (lughas) by Amir Abu al-Mozaffar Tahir b. al-Aidal b. Muḥammad Muhtaj al-Chaghani (d. 987–88 [377]). Here, the gourd is presented as an idol in green (laʿbat-i sabz rang), suggesting that the poet was probably referring to a glazed green or turquoise gourd.⁶²

O maiden’s breast [i.e., gourd] that I sucked early in the morning⁶⁴
While still suffering from the effects of last night’s wine.

When you drink from it, it sounds like the roar of a waterfall, or of a fiery he-camel amongst she-camels.

It echoes as if the drinker gulping it down
Were choking on it.

The conical shape of the upper part of the vessel which often corresponds with its lower section is referred to by Muhammad b. Najib Bakran (early thirteenth century) when describing the port of Siraf on the Persian Gulf. He writes, “We have heard that in some valleys of this mountain [which overlooks the city] one can find spherical stones pointed on both ends like a kuza-yi fuqāʾ.”⁶⁵ The spherical shape of the vessel is also mentioned by Mujir al-Din Baylaqani (twelfth century). He warns, shikam mashaw hama chūn kuza-yi fuqāʾ zi hīn (“Do not become all belly out of greed like a gourd of fuqāʾ”).⁶⁶ In the Tārīkh al-nuṣarā (twelfth century), Najm al-Din Abu al-Rajaʾ Qumi also evokes the full form of the beer gourd by suggesting, chūn kuza-yi fuqāʾ hame shikam bashed (“like the beer gourd, it is nothing but belly”).⁶⁷ The expression, mudavvar-gūnā ... chunān ki shakī kuza-yi fuqāʾ dārad (“roundish ... resembling the shape of the kuza-yi fuqāʾ”)⁶⁸ which appears in Khāja Nasir al-Din Tusi’s Šamsīkhnaṯā-ya Ṭikhanī (ca. 1256–59), underlines once again the vessel’s spherical volume. Even the exceptional forms, like the “pear” shape (“fuqāʾ-i gulaḥī”; fig. 13) of some containers are expressly mentioned in Persian literature.⁶⁹

Khaqani (twelfth century), on the other hand, refers to the gaseous nature of fuqāʾ and the string about the vessel’s constricted neck.⁷⁰

⁵⁴ Ali al-Butti (d. February 1015) who evidently preferred the beverage when it did not burst out.

⁶⁵ يأ رابث مصصت بكراء
و قد عراني خمار مغبرة
ل هدير إذا مرتت به
مثل هدير النحل في النوق
كان ترجعه إذا رشف الرا
شف في صياح مخونق

⁶⁶ O maiden’s breast [i.e., gourd] that I sucked early in the morning.⁶⁴
While still suffering from the effects of last night’s wine.

⁶⁷ When you drink from it, it sounds like the roar of a waterfall, or of a fiery he-camel amongst she-camels.

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⁷⁰ Khaqani (twelfth century), on the other hand, refers to the gaseous nature of fuqāʾ and the string about the vessel’s constricted neck.
vessel is of importance, since it implies that, contrary to common assumption, despite its volume the *kuze* was meant to hold liquid:

My heart is distressed [constricted] like a beer gourd since The cold is my companion and the snow my confidant.

An expression in the *Kalila va Dimna*, "to force someone into the *kuza-yi fuqa*" (dar *kuza-yi fuqa* kardan), in other words, to limit someone’s possibilities or his means of earning money, emphasizes once again the narrow mouth of the spherico-conical vessel in question. The expression was widely used by Persian classical poets, among others Mujir al-Din Baylaqani. Ubayd-i Zakani’s often libertine and scatological, yet highly important, work (fourteenth century) includes an amusing anecdote regarding the narrowness of the vessel’s spout: A man asked a beer vendor (a *fuqa*) for a [gourd of] *fuqa* and was given one whose contents were sour and spoilt. The man drank up and paid ten dinars for the beverage. The vendor said, “My *fuqa* was not worth this money.” The man replied, “I am not paying for the *fuqa*, but for your skill to sh... with such a big a... into such a small opening!” It seems that Ubayd was actually inspired by

A distich by Nizam al-Din Mahmud Qamar Isfahani, a twelfth-century poet, also uses the container’s small volume and perhaps its narrow opening as a metaphor for melancholy and grief. The reference to the size of the

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Fig. 15. A deformed beer gourd from Ray; vessel in the middle in fig. 14. Height 90 mm., diam. 110 mm., diam. of the spout 14 mm.

Fig. 16. The deformed beer gourd from Ray seen on figs. 14 and 15.
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Fig. 18. Beer gourd from Rayy on the right in fig. 14 and 17, inscribed
barakatun 6-šahibiši 6ibrāʾ ʿamalu Hamshādā ("divine grace to its owner, drink, made by Hamshād"). ʿIbrāhīm, the owner’s name, is not visible on this picture, see figs. 17 and 22.

The time has passed when we would take a fuqāʾ from you [i.e., draw inspiration from you]
Now that this gourd has been sucked by a stranger [i.e., inspiration has been drawn by a stranger].

An enigma-poem (lughaz) cited by the fourteenth-century author, Shihab al-Din al-Abshīhi al-Mahālī, proves, however, both the fact that the vessel was very heavy and that there was little need to suck on the gourd, for once the spout was pierced, the drink would gush out by itself. 80

He [the fuqāʾ] is imprisoned without having committed a crime
In prison he is wearing a shirt [as heavy as] lead [i.e., the heavy gourd itself] 81
If you let him go, he jumps high

content of the spheroidal vessels was by sucking on the opening. 79

ِرَفَت آنِهُ فَتْعالِع از تِوُل ڭاشاپُم دُگر بار
ما را پِس از این کوزه که بیگانه مکیده است

Fig. 17. Beer gourd from Rayy on the right in fig. 14. Height 110 mm.,
diam. 105 mm., diam. of the spout 14 mm.

a real incident which took place three and a half centuries earlier in the dwelling of Fakhr al-Dawla Abī Ghalib, the vizier to the Buyid prince Baha al-Dawla Fīrūz (989–1012). There, the humorous Abū ʿAli al-Butti, whose very personal way of perceiving the beer gourd had already been mentioned, was offered a bad home-made fuqāʾ by its maker. He turned it back looking puzzled. The man asked why he was so perplexed. He replied “I was thinking about the precision of your craft, wondering how you could pour that amount of dirt in such a small opening”! Two great Arab authors, Ibn Athir and Yaqut, relate the story. 78 Another anecdote in Jahiz’s al-Hayawān 86 also illustrates the small opening of the beer gourd. The author recalls someone making a bet that he could lift a double-handled vessel (dastiṣṭa) with his feet and pour its content into cups (rāṭliyyāt) and beer gourds (fuqāʾiyyāt). He succeeded in doing so and thus won the bet.

As is evident from one of Saʿdi’s distichs, which can be regarded as a metaphor, one of two ways of drinking the
Fig. 19. Beer gourd from Rays seen in figs. 14 (right), 17 and 18. Detail of the beginning of the inscription and the potter’s signature: barakatun . . . ‘amalu Hamshadā (“divine grace . . . made by Hamshad”).

To kiss your lips, he feels so happy for having been delivered.

The image of the fuqā’ bursting out of the vessel is further illustrated in one of Awhadi’s distichs:96

من فقاع از عشق آن رخ بعدنی خواهم کشودن
چون فقاع عمّ عيب نتوان كرد أكر جوشي برآرم

For the love of that face, I will from now on open [gourds

Fig. 20. Beer gourd from Ray seen in figs. 14 (right), 17, 18 and 19. Close-up of the potter’s signature: ‘amalu Hamshadā (“made by Hamshad”).

of] fuqā’ [i.e., I will draw inspiration]
My fuqā’ will not spoil if I gush out [or, being a fuqā’ myself, no one will blame me for bursting out].

The twelfth-century Tarikh al-wusarāc also describes a sudden burst of anger by referring to the pressure with which fuqā’ escaped out of the vessel (barjushidan): Ra’iis al-Din chun kuza-yi fuqā’ barjushid va guft . . . (“Ra’iis al-Din burst out like a beer gourd and said . . .”).85

Thus, contrary to the assertion that the small opening of the gourd hindered the flow of liquid,84 these exam-

Fig. 21. Beer gourd from Ray seen in figs. 14 (right), 17, 18, 19 and 20. Detail of the inscription: /li-jabi/bihi ishrab (“[to its] owner, drink”).

Fig. 22. Beer gourd from Ray seen in figs. 14 (right), 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21. “Ibrahim,” the owner’s name, was carved on the vessel after the firing.
amples suggest otherwise. It appears that one hardly needed to suck the fuqa\(^{c}\) out of its gourd for, once the vessel was opened, the pressure inside enabled its easy escape.\(^{50}\)

In classical Persian poetry, this apparent gush of liquid led to the coining of the metaphorical expression fuqa\(^{c}\).

\textit{gushidan.} Most often used in parables of mystical works, it implies a spontaneous and intuitive thought or idea “bursting” and “gushing” out, in other words, arising from out of itself. The expression has the same connotation as the Latin \textit{poiesis} or the German \textit{hervorbringen}, i.e., “to bring forth.”\(^{56}\) If one accepts that fuqa\(^{c}\) was alcoholic, it is tempting to suggest that like wine, opium, or any other drug, the drink was regarded as a means of releasing the unconscious and allowing its uninhibited flow.

To enjoy the full flavor of fuqa\(^{c}\), the drink was kept cool by placing it in ice or snow, as is evident from the poems of Suzani Samarqandi and Qamar Isfahani cited earlier.\(^{61}\) Khaqani and Nizami also confirm the close association of ice and the beverage.\(^{62}\) According to Khaqani,

\begin{quote}

های خاتمی بنای عمر بر یخ کرده اند
زو قفع مگشای چون محکم نخواهی یافت.

Oh Khaqani, life has been built on ice.
Do not open a fuqa\(^{c}\) [draw inspiration] from it, for you will not find it solid [enough].
\end{quote}

In \textit{Layla and Majnun}, Nizami relies on the image of the beer gourd and ice to emphasize Layla’s disdain for Majnun’s love:

\begin{quote}

تکشاده نقاهی از سلام
برخته بخ نوشته نام.

My salutations are not worth opening a fuqa\(^{c}\).
My name is written on a block of ice [i.e., it will disappear with the melting of the ice].
\end{quote}

Since fuqa\(^{c}\) was most appreciated when drunk ice cold, it was a favored drink during the hot summer season and in places such as the hammams. According to a well-known episode in Firdawsi’s life, when Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna expressed little appreciation for Firdawsi’s monumental \textit{Shahnâma}, the poet was deeply disappointed and went to a bath. There, he drank a gourd of fuqa\(^{c}\) and divided the reward sent to him by his powerful patron between the fuqa\(^{c}\) vendor and the bathkeeper.\(^{80}\) As Firdawsi perhaps meant to forget his troubles, the incident tends to confirm once again the intoxicating properties of the beverage. It must also have been a rather inexpensive drink, since the poet gave part of his reward to the fuqa\(^{c}\) vendor to mark his disdain for the king.

The cheapness of the beverage is also implied in Nizami’s distich cited earlier, for Majnun complains that his greetings are not even worth opening a gourd of beer. Another reference in the \textit{Marzbân-nâma}, originally written in Tabari in the tenth century and translated into Persian in the early thirteenth century,\(^{69}\) suggests that the price of fuqa\(^{c}\) — even with its gourd — did not amount to much. The text states that people of stature would not drink from someone else’s vessel, and once they had emptied their gourd they would discard it.\(^{91}\) The same image is often used in Persian twelfth-century poetry when evoking women’s unfaithfulness, abandoning men who have lost their means like an emptied gourd of fuqa\(^{c}\). Even in their wording these distichs are nearly the same. Examples can be found in the \textit{Sindbâd-nâma},\(^{12}\) in Sanai’s \textit{Dvân},\(^{30}\) and in the poetry of Jamal al-
Hukama Dihqan ʿAli Shatranji of Samarqand. Here is his qīfṣa:

Do not give your heart to women, because

Ibn al-Ukhwaw states that used vessels could be cleaned with a miswāḥ, a small stick, but as old gourds began to smell after a while, they eventually had to be replaced. These last observations help to explain the abundance of spherico-conical vessels on archaeological sites dating roughly before the fourteenth century when the popularity of fiqār appears to have been on the decline.
The absence of gourds in other locations can be explained by unfamiliarity with the drink, either because it was unfashionable or possibly because it was banned for its alcoholic content.

Among the *fuqa* dealers there were men but also youths who eventually became their clients’ lovers. Attar’s poem in the *Mantiq al-Tayr* about the man who sold all his belongings to buy *fuqa* from the boy he loved is an outstanding description of such a situation in a mystical context.27

Other poems to be found in a manuscript collection of quatrains refer to the passion for youths or men selling *fuqa* as well as to some other characteristic topics related to that beverage. The volume is datable to the thirteenth or fourteenth century and is preserved in the Aya Sofiya Library (no. 2051).

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A first quatrain shows once more that the *fuqa* was kept in ice and presents the beer seller himself as the beloved:29

When everything was gone and he grew poor
His love grew stronger, more and then yet more —
Though food was given him by passers-by.
His endless hunger made him long to die
(Each morsel that he had would disappear,
Not to be eaten but exchanged for beer,
And he was happy to endure the pain,
Knowing that soon he could buy beer again.)
When someone asked: "What is this love?" he cried:
"It is to sell the world and all its pride —
A hundred times — to buy one drop of beer.
Such acts denote true love, and it is clear
That those who cannot match this devotee
Have no acquaintance with love’s misery.29

As for me, my yearning for you, oh houri-faced
beer seller,
Sowed seeds of torment when it was to bear fruit.

The heart that night and day opened *fuqa* through you
[i.e., drew inspiration from you]
Has now written the words of union with you on ice [i.e.,
has now given up hope to possess you, or to reach the
mystic Union].

Two other quatrains mention youths who sold beer (referred to as sons of beer vendors) as the loved ones, and the first poem confirms that the *fuqa* was drunk cold:30

Love led a lord through paths of misery.
He left his splendid house and family
And acted like a drunkard to be near
The boy he loved, who lived by selling beer —
He sold his house and slaves and all he had
To get the means to buy beer from this lad.
O son of the fuqāʿ seller, suffering for you is a pleasure. I am running after you because breathing your dust is a pleasure.

You talk to me coldly but I’m never offended by you, You have chosen the trade in which your coldness itself is pleasure.

and:

جُون يور نقعي دول آورلد بَدست
در پایی فکند آن صنم این نوع بدست
دی گفت که این نقاع بکشای و بخور
کنتم فقع از تو میگشاهم پیورست

When the son of the fuqāʿ seller stole my heart, He, that idol, threw it at his feet with disdain.

Yesterday he said “open this gourd of beer and drink it" [i.e., get inspiration].
I answered “I always open your fuqāʿ” [i.e., you always are my source of inspiration].

The establishment and cultivation of these types of relationships tend to confirm that fuqāʿ was intoxicating.

2.4. Technical observations on fuqqāʿa. It has been argued that the storage of liquids in these spherico-conical vessels raises a number of conservation problems, for most of the gourds were unglazed and too porous to hold them. On the basis of tests made with Nishapur material, however, Hawser and Wilkinson have concluded that these vessels “hold volatile liquids, water, and oil for weeks without seepage.” According to Ettinghausen, the Nishapur findings were “corroborated by R.M. Dzhanpoladian’s observation that the inner surfaces of the vessels were covered with a special coating of a dense, hard, and fire-proof clay which made them not only thick but also impenetrable and not unlike ’stone-ware’.” Finally, it should be added that, unlike wine or other spirits, beer does not keep for a long time without special processes and therefore the fuqāʿ must have been consumed shortly after it was brewed.

The thickness of the vessel’s body and the nature of the paste were of great importance on technical grounds (fig. 1, middle). Apart from preventing leakage, the thick walls could resist the pressure from the gaseous beverage inside. Glass bottles of the same period typically had thin bodies and non-uniform textures and would have been highly unsuitable for the storage of.

fuqāʿ. The gourd’s small spout — used as an argument against its role as container for liquid — also proved to be an added advantage, for it helped reduce the surface from which the gas could escape. To seal the content of the vessels hermetically, their rounded tops were covered with a skin that was tightly fastened about their constricted necks. The particular shape of the neck, often marked with very thin grooves, helped anchor these strings and can perhaps be regarded as a distinguishing feature of those gourds made to hold fuqāʿ.

2.5. Chronological contribution to the identification of the spherico-conical vessels as fuqqāʿa. A final argument for the use of spherico-conical vessels as beer gourds can also be found by comparing the period of their popularity — at least in the Iranian world — to the frequency with which the term fuqāʿ-gushidan and its derivatives were used in classical Persian literature. In his remarkable study on the metaphorical sense of the expression, N. Purjavadi suggests that the term was current in eleventh- and twelfth-century Persian literature, but gradually disappeared afterward. While still mentioned in Ilkhanid literature, fuqāʿ-gushidan had fallen into disuse by the fourteenth century and Hafiz, for instance, never incorporated the expression in his divan. According to another study, the custom of drinking fuqāʿ in the Islamic lands began in the Abbasid period and ended with the Mongol invasion and the fall of the caliphate. Although the terminus ante quem for the consumption of this particular beverage and the currency of the expression fuqāʿ-gushidan in classical texts do not exactly correspond, it is nevertheless tempting to suggest a direct correlation between the two: the term gradually disappeared from literature when fuqāʿ, for still unknown reasons, lost its appeal, and the manufacture of the spherico-conical vessels ceased.

3. OTHER USES FOR THE FUQQĀʿA

The technical and literary evidence presented here helps to confirm the role of the vessels in question as beer gourds. This particular function, however, does not exclude other applications for the kuṣa-yi fuqāʿ or those similar to it. According to the Bayān al-Ṣanāʿāt, newly made gourds ("kuṣa-yi fuqāʿ-i nāw") could be utilized in the preparation of a number of substances. For instance, the text mentions the use of the vessel for making a mixture out of t alc. This could then be rubbed on one’s hands or mouth to protect against fire, molten stone, or molten iron. New gourds could also serve in the prep-
aration of a substance that probably resembled today’s nail varnish and lent a gilt appearance to fingers. To eliminate the acidity from reduced wine (ṣikī), the new ʿızā-yī fuqā was immersed in a sīki jar. The text specifies the use of “new” gourds for these preparations, since old ones had undoubtedly absorbed some of their original content and were beginning to smell.

Another rather curious usage for the gourd is mentioned in the Manāqīb al-ʿArīfīn (fourteenth century). The author, ʿArīfī, recommends that, “if a child becomes sick and develops an aversion to the medicinal draught prescribed for him by his physican, he will naturally ask for fuqā. The clever physician should then pour the draught into a gourd of fuqā and give this to the child, who will think it is fuqā and happily drink it.” Finally, al-Damārī describes an even more curious role for the beer gourd. He writes, “There are deadly scorpions around Nasībayn. It is said that they originated from Shahr-i Zūr. A king encircled Nasībayn. He took the scorpions and put them into beer gourds and catapulted them into the city.”

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NOTES

Authors’ note: A first and short paper on this subject was published by A. Ghouchani (ʿAbd-Allāh Quchānī) in Persian at the end of spring 1988 in Iran (“Ḵūzā-yī fuqā,” Majallā-yī bāstānshināsī va āṯārkh, 2, no. 1 (Autumn-Winter 1366/1987-88), pp. 40-45, with an English summary entitled, “Beer Brewing Jar and Not Mercury Container, Grenade, Rotating Globe, or…” p. 87). Important discoveries made in Iran having since then confirmed Mr. Ghouchani’s thesis, it was decided to write the present article in which we take into consideration the items brought to light in Iran. Historical and literary evidence gathered on these containers is also presented in this paper in order to show their use as well as their significance in Muslim society.

The completion of this work would not have been possible without Dr. Massumeh Farhad’s close collaboration in 1988, and we would particularly like to express our gratitude to Dr. Farhad for her invaluable assistance. We owe special thanks to the following eminent scholars whom we consulted on problems of interpretation of Persian poetry: Mohammad Dabirisyaghi, Ehsan Eshraghi, Shafī Kadkani, Mohammad-Djarar Mahdijoub. We would also like to express our great appreciation to the following for their help on this article: the staff of the Iranian Organization for Cultural Heritage in Tehran, the staff of the Iranian Center for the Study of Art and Architecture (Isfahan); Mrs. Marthe Bernus-Taylor of the Musée du Louvre, Professor Michael Rogers of the S.O.A.S., Dr. Sheila Canby and Mrs. Rachel Ward of the British Museum, Mr. Yosuf Rægeb of C.N.R.S., Dr. Oliver Watson of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Mrs. Jeanne Moullierac and Miss Fabienne Paysaire of the Institut du Monde Arabe, Mrs. Julia Bailey of Harvard University, Miss Azīzh Azodi, Miss Marie-Christine David, and Mr. Jean Soustiel. Figs. 15, 17, and 23 were drawn by Ms. Mahnaz Gōrdji.


2. Rogers refers to one such example in the Gemeentemuseum (inv. no. OKI 39). This richly decorated vessel is 21 cm. high and measures 16 cm. in diameter (ibid., p. 151 and pl. 3, p. 155). Rogers also claims that in 1966 in Tehran he saw “a massive spherico-conical vessel, with the usual ribbed exterior and pointed base, but with handles at the neck, for it measured 50 cm. by 30 cm. It had been partially covered with a thin turquoise glaze, now much decayed, and must have served for storage purposes” (ibid.). For an illustration of a large type (height: 261 mm., diam.: 241 to 260 mm.) from a private collection in Paris, see fig. 1, middle example. See also n. 4.


4. Ghouchani, who lives in Iran, remembers having seen a big spherico-conical vessel, five times heavier than the usual ones. That massive container seems to have ended in the Iran Bastan Museum and is perhaps identical to the one inscribed under no. 9944.

5. At least three such examples are known: one in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs of Paris (no. 10951-B) now on loan to the Institut du Monde Arab in Paris; the other in the Musée de Sèvres (no. MNS.18632 of Paris, and a third one in the British Museum (72 7-29 8). All three vessels are covered with a turquoise glaze. See also n. 2 for the reference to a fourth, partially glazed, large vessel.


7. Ettinghausen (cited above, n. 3), p. 218, gives a comprehensive list of sites where these vessels were found. According to Rogers, however, Ettinghausen’s list “needs some amendment,” since many of the vessels were not necessarily made in these locations but were probably exported to them (Rogers [cited above n. 1], pp. 147-48). We tend to believe they were mostly made locally (see n. 8).

8. Those from Sultaniya are kept on the spot, in the archaeo- logical storehouse. One spherico-conical vessel from Rayy now in the Iran Bastan Museum (no. 9924) requires special attention (fig. 12). Stamped by “Bāqī b. Thālab,” this container was deformed by faults in the firing. Since the importation of a damaged piece seems highly improbable, it is reasonable to conclude that all the vessels stamped by this potter were made in Rayy and not in Egypt as stated by ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿAllī Yūsuf, “Darāsa fi al-fulkhikār al-Miṣrī: (1) Qawārīr al-naft,
"Dirāsāt ʾāthārīyya Islāmiyya, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1978), pp. 1–79, esp. pp. 8–9, 13–14, pls. 29, 31, and 38. See also above n. 7. Contrary to ʿAbd al-Raʿūf ʿAli Yūsuf’s assertion, “Baqi” is not the potter’s name and “Ibn Thaʿlab” that of the owner. The two parts, although stamped separately, form only one name: that of “Baqi b. Thaʿlab.”

9. For a general bibliography, see K.A.C. Creswell, A Bibliography of the Architecture, Arts and Crafts of Islam to 1st Jan. 1960 (Cairo, 1960), cols. 581–82. A critical bibliography and other important references to the vessels appear in Ettinghausen (cited above, n. 3), pp. 218–19 and Rogers (cited above n. 1), pp. 147–51. See also ʿAbd al-Raʿūf ʿAli Yūsuf’s article (cited above, n. 8) which deals with spherico-conical vessels from Fustat that are kept in the Islamic Fine Arts Museum in Cairo.

10. Ettinghausen is the main defender of this thesis; see his article cited in n. 3.


12. See W. I. Hildburgh’s excellent article on the subject: “Aeolipiles as Fireflowers,” Archaeologia, 94 (1951): 27–55, esp. pp. 52–55. While H. Sevriq (cited above n. 6, pp. 81–89) and Dumbravb (cited above n. 3, pp. 75–79) have also fully supported this idea, Rogers (cited above n. 1, pp. 147–48, 157–58) believes that some of the vessels were used for other purposes as well.

13. For a survey of the various hypotheses regarding these vessels, see Ettinghausen (cited above n. 3), pp. 218–29, Rogers (cited above n. 1), 147–58 and R.M. Dzhanpolajan (cited above n. 6), pp. 203, 208–13.

14. Rogers (cited above n. 1), pp. 152–57. See also J. Moulierac, “Un vase d’alchimie de l’Orient médiéval islamique,” Technologia, 10/2–4 (1987): 83–89, esp. p. 86. This point of view does not rule out the use of spherico-conical vessels as containers of liquid or mercury, discussed at the end of this article. In fact, the vessels appear to have lent themselves to such functions.

15. Ettinghausen (cited above n. 3), p. 223. Although the existence of so many vessels tend to contradict the role of these vessels as containers for mercury, Ettinghausen seems to have knowingly included the information in his article hoping perhaps for the resolution of the problem in future; see the end of this article.

16. Perhaps even more; a considerable number of new items seized from antique dealers have been added since spring 1990 to the museum’s reserve.


18. Rogers, who did not have access to the original Persian text and relied on an incorrect Russian translation of the Bayān al-Ṣanāʿī, writes that “similar vessels were found at Ani . . . where the average size of the standard spherico conical vessel is, anyway, greater than that of the Dvin examples. It must surely be to the massive type that a passage in the Bayān-i Šanāʿī of Abū’l-Fadl Khobaysh b. Ḳibārīm al-Tiflīsī (edited Afskār: Tehran, 1957: p. 26 [304]), Vīl’čevský: Sphremokhische Sassady [sic] z Peredneasianom Traktoje po Prikladnoj Tekhnologi 12-ogo veka. Sovetskaya Arkeologiia 1961/2: pp. 210–2) states, in describing the preparation of cinnabar: “take a massive glazed vessel, turnunj (sic like an orange) with a narrow base and neck, like a pitcher for making beer . . . Oranges in fact have nothing to do with the question since the vessel is turnunj, a homonym meaning with a constriction. The whole account is puzzling (are we to assume, for example, that all the mercury pots were glazed?), since cinnabar is so common in Nature that its artificial preparation should have been superfluous and since mercury is prepared from it by roasting. If the preparation of mercury, not cinnabar, was intended, surely an open dish, rather than these extremely narrow-necked jars, would have been more suitable?” (Rogers, cited above, n. 1, pp. 151–52, n. 11).

In response to Rogers’s queries, Abū al-Fadl Hubaysh b. Ḳibārīm al-Tiflīsī refers specifically to a “glass vessel” and not a “massive glazed vessel,” as it has been translated (for “glass vessel”) which might correspond to those used for the preparation of cinnabar, see A. von Saldern, B. Nolte, etc., Gläser der Antike, Sammlung Erwin Oppenländer [Hamburg, 1974], p. 255, pls. 745 and 746). Second, although Rogers wonders whether the author did not mean the preparation of mercury from cinnabar rather than cinnabar from mercury, the text is quite clear on the subject, namely the making of cinnabar from mercury. The preparation of cinnabar from mercury is also mentioned in the following sources: MasDū Sāʾīd Ṣahmān, Divān, pub. Gulshāfi (Teheran, 1362/1983), p. 35; Naṣīr Khuršāw, Divān, ed. M. Minvā and M. Muḥaqqiq (Tehran, 1365/1986), p. 83 (shangarf-i Rūmī/BYZantine cinnabar) and Khvāja Nasr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Tansākhamānī-i Ḳhārī, ed. M. Madāvī (Tehran, 1348/1969), p. 208 (cinnabar used by painters for the preparation of colors).

It should also be noted that Persian words transcribed in Russian and then from Russian into English were distorted by the passage of h to x, ṣ to s and vice versa. Therefore, the name of the author is Hubaysh, not “Khubaysh” and the title of the text is Bayān al-Ṣanāʿī and not “Bayān-i Ṣanāʿī.”

19. See nn. 3 and 10.


21. See n. 11.

22. Mercier (cited above, n. 11), pp. 41–66, 84–89.

23. Mercier refers to Miskawayh’s (d. 421 [1030]) Taṣāwur al-ʿumām, ed. H.F. Amedroz, 2 vols. (Cairo-Oxford, 1914, 1: 46, who uses the term ʿqawwār ar-rāʾ). Mercier has translated the term with the following comments: “grenades (de verre) à feu. Feu est évidemment encore synonyme de napht.” (Mercier (cited above, n. 11), p. 53); “ces grenades en verre sont les ‘gouarir en-neft’ des textes arabes” (ibid., p. 98; see also p. 51).

24. Mercier (cited above, n. 11), p. 43.

25. In the Subh al-ʿAṣr, 14 vols. (Cairo, 1913), 2: 138, Abū al-ʿAbbas Ahmad al-Qadkhashdi claimed: “ʿqawwār al-naṣfāt, a weapon or instrument of war, a vessel filled with naphtha that is hurled at citadels and fortified walls to set these ablaze. The word ʿqawwār itself refers to glass, but the term can also be substituted for the instrument for throwing naphtha.” See also ʿA. Dihkhudā, Lughatnāma, under ʿqawwār, no. 109, letter qīf, p. 304 and under ʿqārūn (ʿqārūn-awdāzin), no. 57, letter qīf, p. 31.

26. Ibn Maʿẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, 18 vols. (Qum, 1363/1984), 7: 416 mentions under naft: “naṣfāt are vessels made from copper and used for throwing naphtha and fire.” Dihkhudā confirms that in Persian naṣfāt is a copper vessel with which naphtha and fire are thrown at the enemy. Lughatnāma, see under naṣfāt, no. 151, letter nīn, p. 652.
27. For the full text and reference to this incident, see the last paragraph in this article.

28. Ettinghausen (cited above, n. 3), pp. 224–25. For articles on the use of these vessels as aeolipiles, see n. 12.


31. For examples, see n. 5.


33. Private communication, London, 24 June 1988. The writers are most grateful to Professor Rogers for providing them with this information.

34. Private communication, Paris, July 7, 1988. The writers are much indebted to Mrs. Bernus-Taylor for having supplied them with her yet unpublished findings and for having shared her views with them. Her forthcoming publication on the excavation will undoubtedly throw further light on the problem.

According to W. Hawser and C. K. Wilkinson, one of the three destroyed kilns at Qanat Tapā (Nishapur) "produced a huge quantity of wasters... often called by others hand-grenades." The excavators did not relate these objects with the running of the kiln (W. Hawser and C. K. Wilkinson, "The Museum’s Excavations at Nishapur," Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 34/4 (April 1942): 81-119, esp. p. 89 and figs. 7 and 8). See also C. K. Wilkinson, Nishapur, Pottery of the Early Islamic Period (New York, 1973), pp. XXXII–XXXIII.

35. Baron Carra de Vaux, Traduction des Mécaniques et de l'éleverateur de Héron d'Aлексandria sur la version arabe (Paris, 1894). For a survey of Western texts on aeolipiles, including those of Hero of Alexandria, see W. L. Hildburgh’s study cited in n. 12.

36. Rogers, (cited above, n. 1), pp. 147, 158.


38. These containers may have been discovered in Rayy, see next paragraph.

39. R. M. Dzhapanaljan (cited above, n. 6), p. 210; these vessels are datable from the 10th to the 13th century. Ibid., p. 213. Although Seyrig also noted the grape seeds in the vessels, “présence de pépins de raisin,” he ignored their presence and insisted that the vessels served only as aeolipiles (cited above, no. 6, p. 85, n. 4).

40. R. M. Dzhapanaljan (cited above, n. 6), p. 204. On the Nishapur excavation site, W. Hawser and C. K. Wilkinson noticed “dozens of them [sphero-conical vessels] everywhere, in courtyards and in houses... They hold volatile liquids, water, and oil for weeks without seepage” (W. Hawser and C. K. Wilkinson [cited above, n. 34], p. 89 and figs. 7 and 8); also see Wilkinson, Nishapur, Pottery and the Early Islamic Period [cited above, n. 34], pp. 323–24, pls. 105–17). It should also be noted that it is far easier to imagine bottles scattered about on a site than fire blowers! (See also Hildburgh’s comments on this subject cited above in the text.) In reference to various excavation reports, Seyrig himself maintained that these vessels were found everywhere on archaeological sites without mentioning them specifically in conjunction with kilns or fireplaces.

41. Seyrig (cited above, n. 6), p. 89.

42. Another sphero-conical vessel from Sumarra has also been identified as a wine container because of its Kufic inscription. This was first read as, “And they sip a matured wine from us.” (Iraq Government, Department of Antiquities, Excavations at Samarra, 1936–39 (Baghdad, 1940), part II, p. 3 and pls. VIII–IX). Sauvaget disagreed with this reading and proposed that the phrase was a good-wishes inscription (J. Sauvaget, “Flacons à vin ou grenades à feu grégoises” Mélanges Grégoire, Annaire de l’Institut... 9 (Brussels, 1949), pp. 525–30; see also Seyrig [cited above, n. 6], pp. 82–83). The question does not seem to be solved; we wonder whether the words translated as “matured wine” or “salut et félicité” do not contain the word mazur / barley, wheat... juice (see Muhammad Murtadā al-Zuhaydī, Taj al-’arīs min jawāhir al-qināmis, 3: 541, under mizir).

43. Ettinghausen (cited above, n. 3), p. 224, pl. XLVIII.

44. Ibid., p. 223.

45. S. D. Goitein’s remarks appear as an appendix at the end of Ettinghausen’s article; see Ettinghausen (cited above, n. 3), p. 229.

46. Ettinghausen appears not to have known the real meaning of fuqūs / fuqās, and as Goitein was not an art historian, he did not see the relation between fuqās and sphero-conical vessels.

47. In Arabic, the word refers to small, glass-like bubbles that float and burst on the surface of water and wine (Ibn Manzūr, Lisan al-’Arab (cited above, n. 26), 8: 256, see under fuqūs plural of fuqāa’. In the Dictionnaire Arabe-Français, 2 vols. (Paris, 1860), 2: 621, A. de Biberstein Kazimirski explains the word fuqāa’ as bubbles, beer, and drinks made from raisins or other dried fruits. These beverages, primarily beer, were probably called fuqāa’ because of their gaseous nature and foam. According to Mu’īn’s Farhang i Fārsī, 6 vols. (Tehran, 1342-52/1963-73), 2: 2558-59, the word was derived from the Persian fūgam (see under fuqūs, fuqūs-gushūdan and fuqās). See also ‘A. A. Dākhulad, Lughat al-namūs, under fuqūs, no. 311, letter fa, p. 289; F. Steingass, Persian-English Dictionary, 6th impression (London, 1977), p. 934, under fuqūs, fuqūs-gushūdan and fuqūs; N. Pūrjavādī, “Fuqūs-gushūdan-i Firdawsi va sepas ’Atţār; bahthi dar māhiyati shīr va shīrī az naqar-i ’Atţār,” part 1, Nashīr-i Dānish, vol. 3, no. 3 (Farvardin-Urdibiheshet 1367/April-May 1988), pp. 2–17, esp. p. 5; part 2 published in vol. 8, no. 4 (Khurshad-Tir 1367/June-July, 1367/1988), pp. 14–21.


1965–73), I: 182; ibid., ed. Sa‘īdī Sirjānī (Tehran, 2535 sh/k/1976), p. 151. See also n. 54 for other recipes.

Jürjānī (ibid.), in reference to Avicenna’s Qānūn, which discusses the harmful effects of fuqā’ā on the stomach, has claimed that if one left ivory in fuqā’ā for just one night, it would become so soft that one could carve anything on it the next day. Ibn Baṭlān, in Taṣawwīr al-Suhāka, a twelfth-century text (ed. Gh-H. Yūsufī (Tehran, 1350/1971), p. 137) also mentions the softening quality of fuqā’ā. See also below, n. 54.


50. Plural kīzān al- fuqā’ā, used by al-Damārī (Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad Musā) in Hayāt al-hayawān al-akhrā, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1352/1973), 2: 52. ʻ“Kus fuqā’ā” is referred to by Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad al-Ishbīlī, al-mustawara fi kull fann mustawara, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1292/1877), 2: 253. Kūsā in Persian or in Arabic is the generic name for earthen bottles of all sizes with a more or less long neck.

51. See below the anecdote cited by ʻAbdāy d- Zakānī. If the vessel contained mercury, at least in Turkestan it was called simāb-kuzachā (small kūsā for mercury), a Turkicized Persian name translated first in Russian as simopp-kuzachachā. See M.S. Dudin’s observations in Ettinghausen (cited above, n. 3), p. 222.

52. See nn. 47, 48, and 56. According to Purjavadi (cited above, 47), p. 12, fuqā’ā tasted quite sweet and sometimes smelled of musk. The point of view of this contemporary scholar is, however, contradicted by Sayyād Ḥasan Ghaznavī, a twelfth-century poet, who claimed that the beverage was not sweet (Divān, ed. M-T. Muddaris-Radwān (Tehran, 1328/1949), p. 22; see also below n. 54). When spoiled, fuqā’ā would become very acid. See below for the anecdote cited by ʻAbdāy d- Zakānī and for the way the gourds could be cleaned.

53. See text below and Purjavadi (cited above, n. 47).

54. Purjavadi (cited above, n. 47), p. 4 and p. 5, n. 14. This view is also expressed by Mr. Ghouchani, who equates fuqā’ā with ma‘ār-al-shā’ir or “barley water”. Fuqā’ā made from germinated barley or wheat is mentioned by Ḫūṣā Ḡ. Sulaymān al-Isrā’ī lī (d. ca. 937/1042) in the Kitāb al-aghdiyya, 2nd and 3rd part, ed. F. Feisal (Frankfurt, 1986), pp. 174–75, who writes that there are several ways of making that beverage and gives in detail two recipes for preparing it. One is based on flour of germinated barley seasoned with mint, rue, tarragon, cedrat leaves, and pepper; the other is made with well-baked bread mixed with flour of germinated barley or wheat flavored with celery, spikenard, mastic, cinnamon, and other fine ingredients. A putrid drink, the former is very harmful, claims the writer who undoubtedly prefers the latter, which is less noxious (see also above nn. 48 and 52). In the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Egyptian writer Ibn Ikhwawa also provides two recipes for recipes for sharāb al- fuqā’ā: one is called khāṣṣ and the other al-kharjī (Kitāb Ma‘ālim al-qubā fi aḥkām al- mishba, ed. M-M. Sha‘bān and S-A. ʻIsa al-Mu‘ tafi (Cairo, 1976), pp. 197–98; see also J. Shūʿarīs, Persian trans., A- ʻIna-ı şahrādārī (Tehran, 1347 [1968]), pp. 117–18.). Ibn Ikhwawa’s inclusion of these drinks in his text suggests that, at least officially, they were considered non-alcoholic. For a different view, see below n. 57.

55. See n. 54.

56. S. D. Goitein, A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, vol. 4, Daily Life (Berkeley, Calif., 1983), p. 261. The author also maintains that the beverage “is mentioned in both Arabic papyri and the Geniza; Jewish vendors sold it in Egypt and Jews made it in al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia. It was so popular that the fuqā’ā, the bottle in which it was kept, became a general term for the vessel.”

57. M. Canardi, “al-Ḥakim bi-Amr Allāh,” EI, 2nd ed., letter H, Fr. ed. p. 81, S.D. Goitein (cited above, n. 56, p. 261) also states that the “prohibition to drink honey sherbet (i.e., fuqā’ā), one of the fitful edicts of the caliph al-Hakim, was made in connection with chiliastic expectations of the Muslim year 400 (1009–10), and was certainly only temporary.”


60. Apud Dīkhkhudā, ibid.; Sūzānī Samargāndī, Divān, ed. S. Nāshūhāsāni (Tehran, n.d.), p. 355. There are very small differences between the texts of the poem mentioned by Dīkhkhudā and Shahhūsāni; the distichs cited here are closer to Dīkhkhudā’s.

61. The poet always uses the word rīsa with its double meaning, “fasting” and “day.”

62. Apud Muhammad ʻAvfī, The Lubābā al-Abābī, ed. E-G. Brown and M-M. of Qawwīn, 2 vols. (London, 1903–6), 1: 27. ʻAvfī states that the poem refers to the liquid (fuqā’ā), but obviously it is describing its container. See also below for ʻYaqūt and al-Chaghnānī’s references to the gaseous quality of the drink.


64. Bihrān means “early morning” as well as “virgin.”


68. Ḫrāṣ̄a ʻAshīr d- al-Dīn Tūbī, Tursūkkuhiyya-yi Ikhwānī (cited above, n. 20), p. 195.


72. Niẓām al-Dīn Mahmūd Qamar ʻIsfahānī, Divān, ed. T. Binish (Mashhad, 1363/1984), p. 116. The second hemistich of the distich confirms that the beer gourds were stored in snow to keep the drink ice cold (see below).

73. Seyrig (cited above, n. 6), p. 83.


A SPHERO-CONICAL VESSEL AS A GOURD FOR BEER

81. The reference to a "leaden shirt" in this hemistich seemed puzzling. For G. Rat, who translated Ibnštihī's work nearly a century ago, the problematic words meant "brown clothing," but he did not explain why fuqū'ī should wear brown and how lead (rasās) can get that color (mlustārafī, trans. G. Rat, 2 vols. [Paris, 1899-1902], 2: 545). Here is his translation of this enigma-poem:

Sur une bière en cruchon:
Emprisonnée, sans qu'elle ait commis aucun mèfait,
elle porte, dans sa prison, un vêtement de couleur brune;
La mets-tu en liberté, elle saute en l'air, baisant ta bouche de joie de se trouver délivrée.

In Rat’s defense it must be added that this poem was conceived as an enigma, and that Rat, of course, could have had no clue for identifying the beer containers with the spheroidal vessels.
84. Seyyīg (cited above, n. 6), p. 83; The author has claimed that it was very difficult, if not impossible, to drink from the vessel’s narrow opening.
85. We have examined a number of vessels. Their openings measured usually less than 5 mm. in diameter, but some were wider, even up to 15 mm. In the case of those measuring less than 5 mm., the liquid would require gas pressure to pour with ease.
86. See Pūrjavādī (cited above, n. 47), p. 17.
87. See above, In the Tārikh al-vasara (cited above, n. 67), p. 87. Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Rājā Qumī uses the following expression, Dam sardālar az kuza-yi fuqū'īnd chin yakh dar baghel darad (“the breath is colder than a gourd of beer which is kept on ice”).
89. Nīzāmī al-Āridī, Chahār Maqāla, ed. Mirzā Muḥammad of Qazvin (London, 1910), p. 49. See also S-H. Tāqīzādā, Farangī va Shāhkānāyī ʿū, ed. H. Yaghmāī (Tehran, 1348/1969), p. 234; for several other references to the same story, see Pūrjavādī (cited above, n. 47), p. 4. To explain the presence of gourds scattered about kilns, it has been suggested that the potters not only made the vessels but also quenched their thirst with fuqū'ī while working in the vicinity of the hot kilns. (This idea was proposed to Ghouchani by N. Chagani in a private communication.)
91. Ibid., p. 62: Chūn kuza-yi fuqū'ī ke tā pur-bāshad bar lab va dahā-nash būshāyī khūsh zandad va chūn tuhī-gashī az dast biyānādāzd (“Like a beer gourd that will receive sweet kisses on its mouth as long as it is full, and once it is emptied is thrown aside”). Other references in ibid., p. 86, and not p. 88, as given by Pūrjavādī (cited above, n. 47), p. 7.
96. See below on the frequency of the use of the word fuqū'ī in Persian literature.
97. ʿAttār, Mantīq al-tawr, ed. Sayyād ʿAṣīrī Gahwārīn (Tehran, 1343/1964), pp. 187-88, ed. M.J. Maskhūrī (Tabriz, 1357/1958), pp. 236-37. We are following Gahwārīn’s text; the one established by Maskhūrī is identical except for a few words.
98. Farid ud-Dīn Attar, The Conference of the Birds, trans. Aftkān Darbandī and Dick Davis (Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 173, entitled “A lord who loved a beer-seller.” This fine translation is not a literal one but does follow the Persian text closely enough to show our point.
99. Manuscript Aya Sofiya Library (no. 2051), quatrains nos. 512. More or less the same quatrains is also to be found in Muṣīr al-Dīn Baylāqānī’s Dīwān (cited above, n. 66), p. 392, rubāʿī no. 37.
100. Manuscript Aya Sofiya Library (no. 2051), quatrains nos. 519 and 520.
101. Another interpretation may suggest that the lover liked to see his beloved suffer.
102. Etinghausen (cited above, n. 3), p. 224; see also Rogers’s remark on the porosity of the vessels (cited above, n. 3), p. 150, n. 10, second paragraph.
106. See n. 85.
107. See above for a discussion of this term.
110. See above; the vessels found at Sultaniya have been attributed to the fourteenth century.
111. See above and Pūrjavādī’s article mentioned in n. 47.
112. Abū al-Faḍil Ḥubayṣī b. Ibrāhīm al-Tīfīsī, Bayan al-Sanāʾī (cited above, n. 17), p. 307. This use is well known, for F. Steingass writes under “tulqī”: “talc, a translucent mineral, which is said, when rubbed upon anything, to render it fireproof, and, in a dissolved state, to be an elixir as powerful as the philosopher’s stone, whence the proverb: man hallāʾt
ta'laqā 'staghna'ā anā 'lkhalq. He who has dissolved the ta'laq is independent of all creatures" (Persian-English Dictionary [cited above, n. 47], p. 818).


115. See above.


Addenda: While this article was in press, additional written material and items supporting the views expressed in this paper were found by its authors. These cannot all be mentioned here, but readers interested in pursuing this study might refer to the following:

For an extensive and highly interesting description of the gourd for beer confirming all aspects of the form of the vessel, the beverage itself, etc., as described and explained in this paper, see Muhammad b. Muhammad Zangi Bukhārī, Zangnāmā, ed. I. Afshār (to be published in Tehran, 1371 [1992]), chapter on “Munāzīra-yī mazābā wa fuqā-i ʿAjarniyān” written between the years 1281 and 1317, pp. 71–77. Summary by I. Afshār, “Fuqā-i ʿAjarniyān wa kūzā yī ān,” in Ayendeh 16/9-12 (1369/1990): 704–6.


For containers in cut and carved crystal similar to the kūzayī fuqāʾ filled with the fuqāʾ seen in the Fatimid treasury: Maqrīzī (1364–1442), Khīṭār, pub. Dār al-Ḥiyā al-Ùlum (Beirut, n.d.), 2: 262.


Agglomerated spherico-conical wasters from the Samarqand region, Terres secrètes de Samarcande. Céramiques du VIIIe au XIIIe siècle, catalogue of an exhibition on Samarqand at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 1992, no. 299 (see also nos. 93 and 95).