

## BEER IN EARLY ISLAM A ḤADĪṬ PERSPECTIVE

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[...] That abstinence from Malt  
Has always struck me as extremely curious.  
The Greek mind must have had some vital fault,  
That they should stick to liquors so injurious –  
(Wine, water, tempered p'raps with Attic salt) –  
And not at once invent that mild, luxurious,  
And artful beverage, Beer. [...]

Charles Stuart Calverley (1831–1884)

### Beer: a neglected beverage

Indeed, the amazement of this 19<sup>th</sup> century English poet – student at Oxford (from where he was expelled), and student and scholar at Cambridge (where his *Ode to Tobacco* is eternalized in a bronze plaque in Rose Crescent) –, his bewilderment and implicit criticism could easily be transferred from Greek culture, so obsessed with wine, to medieval Arabic–Islamic cultural expressions, as well as to the scholarship dedicated to it. It is wine, mainly grape wine that dominates poetry and *adab an-nadīm* literature, it is wine and viticulture that attracts attention as symbol-laden beverage, as prestigious drink, and as high art of agriculture.

It was wine that became a symbol for the cyclic life of death, birth and growth, a symbol for intoxication and gnostic insight. The poor beer could not – and still cannot – compete on these grounds. Even though some beers, especially when fortified with honey or sweet dates to reach higher alcohol rates, could age to a certain extent, it seems likely that most beers had, compared to wine, a lower alcohol strength. With an alcohol level of maybe 3 % (and lower) to 8 % on the average, they therefore had to be drunk relatively young. There was much less charm of ageing, and being one of the many daily products of grain, beer and the spike of barley could never match with wine and grape. It remained a drink, at its best intoxicating, for the average population (*'awāmm*). There are vague attempts to praise beer in Arabic verses, as has been done in numerous poems on wine, but

such beer poems are hardly known, were much less written down and, reflecting the more popular character of beer, were most probably mainly written in dialect, not in classical Arabic. An example is the *zağal* “*mā našribi l-mizr al-‘ağīb*” on *mizr* beer, composed by the Mamlūk poet Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mar (d. 749/1348).<sup>1</sup> On another type of beer, the *fuqqā*, many more Persian verses can be found.<sup>2</sup> Here, we even find attempts to adapt mystical verse to beer instead of wine. The moment when the sealed beer vessel was opened and the carbonated gas exhausted was compared to the moment of mystical experience and sudden insight into the Divine (Gouchani. and Adle 1992:83). But the fact that we do not have a study or anthology on *mizriyya* or *fuqqā’iyya*, as compared to the overwhelming presence of the *hamriyya*, speaks for itself.

However, this neglect of beer does not seem justified in many terms. According to some, beer was one, if not *the* motivation for humans to settle down and start cultivating crops, a decisive step in civilisation. In their opinion, cultivating barley, at least from Neolithic times on, did not serve primarily the production of bread, but the production of beer. Be that as it may, it seems most likely that beer was some kind of side-product of one of the most basic dishes in the history of mankind: porridge. Grain and water started to ferment at a given time under the influence of wild yeast – the first primitive beer was born. Beer production as part of the baking process seems to be of a later stage.<sup>3</sup>

Humans soon discovered the intoxicating effect using it in many contexts from the private to the medical and ritual, and they observed that such alcoholic beverages seemed to be less contaminating than many water sources they used. Beer was healthy, beer was food.

It was maybe this impact beer had for early civilisation that, even though becoming a widespread drink, it played a decisive role in rituals and was connected to Divinities, such as the Egyptian Goddess Hathor, or the Sumerian Goddess Ninkasi. In ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia beer was food, but it was also used in ritual – beside the more luxurious beverage wine. A number of texts and chemical analyses give evidence that a vast number of beer types have been

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<sup>1</sup> Gregor Schoeler and Thomas Bauer have published on the biography and verse of this poet. The *mizr* poem has been published alongside a German translation and commentary by Hinrich Biesterfeld, see Biesterfeld 2012, Bauer 2005.

<sup>2</sup> See the entry of *fuqqā* / *fuqā* in Dihḥudā’s *Luḡatnāma*.

<sup>3</sup> This debate has been vivid already in the 1950ies, with Robert Braidwood (University of Chicago) as critic of the beer hypothesis, and Jonathan Sauer (University of Wisconsin) as its defender. See for their opinions *The American Anthropologist* 55 (1953):515–526, referring to a symposium “Did man once live by beer alone”. The key thesis is discussed until today, Patrick McGovern und Solomon H. Katz (both from University of Pennsylvania) defending the theory of beer’s decisive importance for the beginning of sedentariness. See McGovern 2009:71f, 269ff.

identified, different kinds of dark beers, sweet beers, or spiced beers. It does not come as a wonder that research on beer has a much better standing in the academic disciplines of the Ancient Near East than in Arabic and Islamic Studies, where beer culture is basically absent.<sup>4</sup>

But apart from this civilising significance, beer does not deserve to be labelled as simple when it comes to practical production – it actually can require more work than wine made of fruit. While fruit has enough sugar to be converted into alcohol, grain has not, and therefore its starch needs to be converted first into sugar before undergoing fermentation. In this case, grain is moisturised and germinates, paving the way for the diastase enzyme which will be responsible for the conversion of starch into sugar. After germination the grain is dried and ground (and sometimes in addition slightly roasted).

The key problem with many beers was that they partly had such a low alcohol content, that people at the advent of Islam were insecure in how far they should be classified alcoholic or not. This insecurity connected to alcohol-free and alcoholic versions of beer is something which becomes evident in *ḥadīṭ*. Such low alcoholic beers could be fortified with honey or dates, or other fruits with high sugar content, and they were very often spiced, still in Islamic times.

The second way to produce beer was to use the yeast during the baking process; *ḥamīr* (Ibn Bayṭār, *al-Adwiyā* I, 69) is fermenting dough, and, being tightly connected to baking, made beer production an act closely connected to the kitchen and female labour. Taking into account that *ḥadīṭ* gives extremely little information of how to produce beer, a tradition from ‘Ā’iṣa stands out as interesting – it is the only *ḥadīṭ* in the six canonical Sunnī collections and the Ṣūfī collections up to Al-Kulaynī’s 10<sup>th</sup> century *al-Kāfī* that refers explicitly to beer made of bread. In contrast to a *ḥalāl nabīḍ* that is prepared in the morning and drunk in the evening, or prepared in the evening and drunk the next morning, she prohibits an intoxicating beverage made of bread (*ḥubz*).<sup>5</sup>

A decisive advantage of beer was its availability. Since grain usually does not decay as fast as grapes (and other types of fruits, especially in warm climates) it could be transported and stored much longer. And because of beer being one of the many products made from grain, and grain being central to nutrition, it was an extremely widespread beverage. In terms of quantity, it has definitely surpassed wine through centuries and cultures. It was often considered food – something

<sup>4</sup> On studies on beer referring to the Ancient Near East, see Bottéro 2004:92, Damerow 2012, Homan 2004, Huber 1938, Jennings 2005, Lutz 1922, McGovern 2009, and Milano 1994.

<sup>5</sup> an-Nasā’ī, k. *al-aṣṣriba*, *bāb dīkr al-aḥbār allatī i’talla bi-hā man abāḥa šarāb al-muskir* (48), 5698.

which might be reflected in *sawīq*, a term explained in detail below. *Sawīq* could designate both a certain type of food, porridge, as well as a beer that was drunk.

Assuming that grain was basic to nutrition on the Arabian Peninsula at the advent of Islam, and that fruit cultivation was restricted to a few areas (namely the oases, the Southwest and the Southeast), and taking into consideration that beer was a widespread beverage in all surrounding pre-Islamic cultures, we can expect that beer was known and widespread on the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Muḥammad and his successors, as well. And in fact, the presence of beer is scattered through a variety of medieval sources (and even later, but this is beyond the scope of this article).

Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/885) and Ishāq b. Sulaymān al-Isrāʾīlī (d. ca. 325/937) treat it on medical grounds, it forms part of Ibn Sayyār's 10<sup>th</sup> century Baġdādī cookery book, and some beer names entered lexical works such as Ibn al-Manẓūr's *Lisān al-ʿarab*. In Abū l-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī's (d. 449/1057) description of Paradise, there are not only rivers of water, milk, honey and wine, there are, beside wine in bird-shaped jars and honey wine, even different types of beer: *al-ġiʿa*, *al-mizr* and *as-sukurka* (al-Maʿarrī, *Ġufrān*, 152). And even in Abū l-ʿAbbās ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Muʿtazz's work (d. 296/ 908) *Fuṣūl at-tamāʾīl fī tabāšīr as-surūr*, which is usually treated as a compendium on wine, two known beer names appear among the many names for wine (*asmāʾ al-ḥumūr*): *as-sawīq* and *as-sukurka*.<sup>6</sup>

From later historical, geographical, medical or *ḥiṣba* works, above all from the Fāṭimid until the Mamlūk period, we know that beer was consumed, that beer taverns, *buyūt al-mizr*, existed in Cairo as well as wine houses, *buyūt al-ḥamr*. Sometimes beer, depending on the whim of the ruling caliph, was permitted and served as a source for tax revenue,<sup>7</sup> other times it was forbidden when Islamic laws were followed more strictly in public, or in periods of hunger or scarcity of grain supply.<sup>8</sup> It was the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim (disappeared 411/1021) who, after 1003, renewed several times edicts that prohibited, among other things, the consumption of *mizr* and *fuqqāʾ* beers. Other rulers were more tolerant, or they could act more generously in periods when food supply was sufficient. Beer and wine were drunk by people of different religious faiths, including Muslims, during the Coptic New Year (*nawrūz*) in Egypt, and some Muslims followed the popular

<sup>6</sup> For other versions of this Ethiopian beer see below. On the list of wine names, see the manuscript of *Fuṣūl at-tamāʾīl fī tabāšīr as-surūr* by Abū l-ʿAbbās ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Muʿtazz, Leipzig University Library, Volders 512, f. 40v. See at [www.refaiya.uni-leipzig.de/receive/RefaiyaBook\\_islamhs\\_00001928?lang=en](http://www.refaiya.uni-leipzig.de/receive/RefaiyaBook_islamhs_00001928?lang=en).

<sup>7</sup> One of the examples is the edict from 590/1194 by al-Malik al-ʿAzīz ʿUṭmān in Egypt, by which he protected the *buyūt al-mizr*, raising high taxes on their business while prohibiting at the same time private beer production, cf. Lewicka 2001:489–490.

<sup>8</sup> On possible reasons relating to the scarcity of grain and hunger crisis see Shoshan 1981:183ff.

tradition of opening *fuqqā'* beer vessels on the first of Muḥarram, maybe an alcohol-free variant.<sup>9</sup>

But as in many other cases of historical research, many more sources are available from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries on, while the situation for the first centuries of Islamic history remains often in the shadows. This does not only refer to text material, but also to the lack of relevant archeological and archeobotanical studies. For any topic concerning food and drink, such excavations and research would be of extreme importance. But when it comes to archeological evidence for beer, we have to refer, again, to the period from the 10<sup>th</sup> century on. From this time, we have evidence for a vessel which is often labelled as *kūz al-fuqqā'*, or *kūz-i fuqā'*, a relatively small, sphericonical clay vessel apparently made for beer (though, maybe not exclusively), known from Egypt, Syria, Turkey and Iraq, and finally from Iran to Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> I am not aware of such a vessel from the limited excavations in today's Saudi Arabia, and it remains questionable if a certain vessel type would anyhow officially be classified as wine or beer vessel due to religious-political reasons.

### ***Ḥadīṭ* as a source for early Islamic beer culture**

Facing this scarcity of sources, *ḥadīṭ* texts become a key source for the early period, whether collected in proper *ḥadīṭ* collections, or as part of *mağāzī* literature or later historical works. This article investigates *ḥadīṭ* in the six Sunnī canonical collections and the *Muwatta'*, as well as the four Šī'ī canonical collections. It represents therefore only a selection, even though a decisive one, of the *ḥadīṭ* material.

The debates on the authenticity of this material are well known, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on up to our days, and they do not have to be repeated here.<sup>11</sup> But these occasionally fierce debates mainly revolved around historical, theological, or legal matters. Apart from a few works such as the ones from Franz Rosenthal (1914–2003), *ḥadīṭ* has rarely been used for anthropological studies on material culture and daily life.<sup>12</sup> Not even within the studies on food and drink, becoming more

<sup>9</sup> Šādiqī 1988:38–40. On beer in Egypt from the Fāṭimid to the Mamlūk period, see Lewicka 2011: 487–493.

<sup>10</sup> Gouchani/Adle 1992. Compare the vessel at the Metropolitan Museum of Art measuring 9,8 x 8,3 cm, [www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/140007200?rpp=20&pg=1&gallerynos=452&ft=\\*&pos=15](http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/140007200?rpp=20&pg=1&gallerynos=452&ft=*&pos=15) (last check 8. August 2014). See furthermore below on *fuqqā'*.

<sup>11</sup> For an overview, see Brown 2010:197–268, Brown 1996:81–107.

<sup>12</sup> Studies on prophetic medicine (*aṭ-ṭibb an-nabawī*) are an exception. Waines (1987) refers to al-Buḥārī in his article on cereals and bread in medieval Iraq. For an anthropological study on the Prophet's humor see Maghen 2008.

vivid since the 1990ies, does *ḥadīṭ* play a significant role when it comes to the first decades of Islamic history. In fact, most scholars start investigating the situation from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries on, having a wider range of sources at their disposal.

But the advantage of studying *ḥadīṭ* in the scope of material culture and daily life is obvious.

*Ḥadīṭ* was not exclusively written down and collected for the delight of a few scholars – these texts were meant to guide the early Muslim community, discussing theological matters as well as the preparation of food or personal hygiene. These texts were told by story-tellers (*qāṣṣ*, pl. *quṣṣāṣ*), preachers (*wā'iz*, pl. *wu'āz*) (Berkey 2001), or religious scholars (*'ālim*, pl. *'ulamā'*), in order to teach the population new norms, or to modify existing habits, or sometimes only to confirm existing habits. The individual Muslim needed guidance in daily life, on matters such as washing (and not only the ritual one!), cleaning the teeth or shaving body hair, storing vessels, prohibited food and drink, what textiles to wear, what and how to hunt – all topics embodied in the many chapters, or books and sub chapters on purity (*ṭahāra*), clothing (*libās*), hunting (*ṣayd*), food (*aṭ'ima*) and drink (*aṣriba*), medicine (*ṭibb*), and many others.

In addition, mapping the geographical references in *matn* and *isnād*, and comparing earlier collections with later ones, we can extract information on local habits and temporal developments. Comparing the Šī'ī 10<sup>th</sup> century *al-Kāfi*, a *muṣannaḥ* work collected by Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 328 or 329/939 or 940), with the major Sunnī collections of the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries, one can, for example, observe the development of agriculture by studying crops mentioned in the collections. The variety of fruits and vegetables in al-Kulaynī's *Kāfi* mirrors this agricultural development and its local distribution, dedicating a number of separate chapters to numerous crops, from rice, to lentils, pomegranate, apple, quince, the *utruḡḡ* lemon, banana, celery, purslane, eggplant, reddish, wild thyme and many others.<sup>13</sup> Some of these are not mentioned in earlier Sunnī collections, or only occasionally, indicating that they were perhaps not widely known in the areas the texts refer to. Rice, citrus fruits, the banana, the eggplant, and some other crops, were only introduced or more intensively cultivated in the course of the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries on, a decisive period for agricultural innovation in the early Islamic Empire.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See al-Kulaynī, k. *al-aṭ'ima*, *abwāb al-ḥubūb*.

<sup>14</sup> See Watson 2008. An example: The banana (*mawz*, or *ṭalḥ*; *mawz* could designate both the banana and the plantain) was probably known in 7<sup>th</sup> century Oman and Yemen, even if only due to trade, but it is not mentioned in the six canonical Sunnī collections. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the banana is recorded, even though to a limited extent, in geographical and botanical works, e.g. by al-Hamdānī (d. 945 A.D.), al-Mas'ūdī (d. 957 A.D.), al-Muqaddasī (d. after 1000 A.D.), Ibn Ḥawqal (d. after 977 A.D.), Ibn Rusta (d. after 913

In addition, comparing the canonical Sunnī collections and the Šī‘ī ones, local phenomena in terms of crop cultivation, trade connections, food and drink, or even language, can be traced. Since the *fuqqā* ‘beer’ is mentioned as proper beer only in the Šī‘ī collections with a transmitter network active in the Iraq-Iran region, and since this beer is recorded in other sources of that region, *ḥadīṭ* can give evidence of its strong presence in this area (even though we know about *fuqqā* ‘in Egypt, too).

In terms of language, the following *ḥadīṭ* can indicate local terminology for different dates. Here, the 6<sup>th</sup> Šī‘ī Imam, Ġa‘far aṣ-Šādiq, resident in Medina, travels to al-Ḥīra in Southern Iraq, where he meets a local Iraqī from Kūfa:

“Sa’dān b. Muslim reports on the authority of some of our companions (*‘an ba’di aṣḥābinā*): After Abū ‘Abd Allāh [Ġa‘far aṣ-Šādiq] had come to al-Ḥīra, he rode with his mount to [the fortress] Ḥawrnaq, and dismounted in the shadow of his mount [for a break]. Accompanying him was his black servant, who witnessed a man from Kūfa who had just bought dates. This [man] asked the servant: ‘Who is that?’ And he [the servant] answered: ‘This is Ġa‘far b. Muḥammad.’ Then, he [the man] came closer with a filled bowl and put it between his [Ġa‘far’s] hands. [Ġa‘far] asked the man: ‘What is this?’ He answered him: ‘This is the *barnī* date.’ [Ġa‘far] said: ‘There is healing (*šifā*) in it.’ And he looked at the *sābirī* date and asked: ‘And what is this?’ [The man] answered: ‘The *sābirī* date.’ And [Ġa‘far] said: ‘We call it *al-bayḍ*.’ And, referring to the *muṣān* date, [Ġa‘far] asked: ‘And what is this?’ And [the man] answered: ‘The *muṣān* date.’ [Ġa‘far] added: ‘We call it *umm ġirdān*.’ And he looked at the *šarafān* date and asked: ‘What is this?’ And [the man] answered: ‘The *šarafān* date.’ [Ġa‘far]: ‘We call it *‘aġwa*, and there is healing in it.’”<sup>15</sup>

The dialogue character that can be often encountered in *aḥādīṭ* on daily life, gives evidence for the need to get answers on what is permissible and what is not. In the scope of the Islamic prohibition of alcohol, people approached the Prophet or one of the Imams, asking if their beverage would still be permissible. In these contexts, they sometimes describe what the beverage was made of and if it underwent a fermentation. This is a key situation in *ḥadīṭ* on beverages. Whenever the Prophet or one of the Imams suggests, in return, an alcohol-free variant as an

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A.D.), Ibn Waḥšiyya (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.), Abū Ḥanīfa ad-Dīnawarī (d. at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D.), and Ibn Sayyār’s cookery book has one recipe with banana (Ibn Sayyār/Nasrallah 2007:375, see also 159). It can be assumed that it became better known during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but we can’t yet say exactly how this knowledge was distributed geographically. It is the Šī‘ī *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn* from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥalīd al-Barqī (d. ca. 280/894), and al-Kulaynī’s *Kāfī* from the 10<sup>th</sup> century that have *aḥādīṭ* on the banana, both under the *bāb al-mawz* in the *kitāb al-aṭ’ima*.

<sup>15</sup> al-Kulaynī, *k. al-aṭ’ima, bāb at-tamr*, 15.

alternative, we can have cases where recipes for legally permitted *nabīd* are given. In the *Kāfī* there are a number of such, partly detailed, recipes for *ḥalāl* beverages.

Such texts intended to exemplify, and, depending on the context of reception, have a story-elaborated character, or simply consist of a short guiding utterance.

But even though such texts may only have served as an example, telling a story that was possibly purely fictional, they needed to adhere to the contemporary reference frame in order to be understood. In this sense, and from the point of view of gaining information on material culture and daily life, the question of authenticity becomes less crucial. In this way, *ḥadīth* becomes a pool of information. It reflects discussions alive at a certain period in history, and from these discussions, we can filter to a certain extent facts about material culture and daily life. The huge impact of *ḥadīth* in this context is that it addresses and reflects large parts of the community not only a political or cultural elite. Whereas many other sources, including cookery books, often reflect social elite, *ḥadīth* presents, to a certain extent, the common people, too, like e.g. traders, or farmers. The traditions do not exclusively speak of gold and silver vessels, or glass, but of wooden or clay vessels, hollowed-out gourds or tree stumps.

At the same time, the information recorded in *ḥadīth* is obviously limited due to its selective character – it does not intend to represent entirely the early Muslim community, but it reacts on chosen fields that needed special attention, questions to be clarified, boundaries to be established when it comes to religious norms.

Talking about beverages and beer, this selective character becomes clear. We get informed about the main ingredients in the production of (alcoholic, and a few non-alcoholic) beverages and a number of vessels, and several transmissions describe the border between permissible and prohibited, namely the fermentation (*ḡaliya*, *ištadda*, *taḡayyara*, *hadara*). But we hardly get any or very little information about the place and time of consumption, womens' part in it, the motivations to drink alcoholic beverages, or, rather obviously, discussions on the quality. And, very often, the actual consumer remains vague, if not unknown. One of the few examples of the motivation to drink beer is mentioned in Abū Dāwūd's collection. A person called Daylam al-Ḥimyarī apparently felt the need to clarify his own and his people's habit to drink beer with the Prophet Muḥammad. He said: "O messenger of God, we live in a cold region where we have to work hard. And from this wheat (*qamḥ*) we prepare a beverage (*ṣarāb*) in order to strengthen us with it for our hard work and against the cold in our region." The Prophet asked him straight if this beverage was intoxicating (*hal yuskiru*), which Daylam affirmed. Consequently, the Prophet ordered him and his people to abstain from this drink.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *k. al-ašriba, bāb an-naḥy 'an al-muskir* (5), 3685.



And even though social references with respect to beer are vague in *ḥadīṭ*, we have a tradition from the 10<sup>th</sup> Imām stating that *fuqqā*’ beer is an intoxicating beverage made of fermented dough (*ḥamīra*), and that it was not highly regarded by the populace (*hiya ḥamīratun istaṣṣarahā n-nāsu*).<sup>17</sup>

Comparatively few *ḥadīṭ* texts talk about social settings and places of beer or wine consumption, or places of selling and purchasing such drinks. One of these rare texts can be found in al-Kulaynī’s *Kāfī* where an entire sub-chapter (*bāb*) is dedicated to the *fuqqā*’ beer. Here, Abū Ḡamīla and Yūnis were passing a market in Baghdad (the market is not specified), right in the moment when the *fuqqā*’ seller opened one of his vessels. Some splashes of this beer hit Yūnis’s clothes, and the text continues dwelling on the topic in how far Yūnis can perform the prayer with beer on his clothes.<sup>18</sup> Even though the main intention of this tradition refers to the question in how far it is legitimate to perform the prayer with spots of an intoxicating beverage on one’s clothes, we get by the way information about a *fuqqā*’ vendor on a market in Baḡdād. In a tradition in aṭ-Ṭūsī’s *Istibṣār*, ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn asked the 7<sup>th</sup> Imām, Mūsā al-Kāẓim (Abū l-Ḥasan), about the *fuqqā*’ beer “that is produced and sold on the market (*sūq*), and I do not know how nor when they produce it – is it allowed for me to drink it?” Something, the Imām denied.<sup>19</sup> Since ‘Alī b. Yaḡṡīn was born in 124/741–42 in Kūfa, and al-Kāẓim spent his later life in Iraq as well, we might assume that both were talking about a market in Iraq, either Kūfa, or another city.

City markets had often both shops, as well as products laid out on mats on the ground; *ḥānūt* could signify a place where liquors were sold, and even though we can assume that there were vendors specialised in beer (or a specific type of beer), while others were selling different types of wine, we do not have a concrete image on how this division of liquor sales was structured at different times and different places. What is known is that vendors offering the same kind of wares were often located in the same area of the market. But there were not only goods bought and exchanged on the market. Markets were also places to eat and drink, especially since most households in the first Islamic centuries did not necessarily have their own kitchen. Cooked dishes were often bought on the market and eaten at home, or, depending on aspects like social class, they were eaten on the market that is, directly on the spot. Others, in return, stored food in a special place in the house, but they had to go to the market in order to get it cooked, e.g. in an oven. Even

<sup>17</sup> aṭ-Ṭūsī, k. *al-aṭ’ima wa-lwa-l-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm šurb al-fuqqā*’, 6. Al-Kulaynī, k. *al-aṣriba, bāb al-fuqqā*’, 9. *Ḥamīr(a)* can designate both the fermented dough as well as the yeast. In this tradition, a beer made of bread dough seems more likely.

<sup>18</sup> al-Kulaynī, k. *al-aṣriba, bāb al-fuqqā*’, 7; on this discussion see also aṭ-Ṭūsī, k. *al-aṭ’ima wa-l-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm al-fuqqā*’ (60), 10, and Ibn Bābūya, *bāb ḥadd šurb al-ḥamr wa-mā ḡā’a fī l-ḡinā’ wa-l-malāhī* (11), 4.

<sup>19</sup> aṭ-Ṭūsī, k. *al-aṭ’ima wa-l-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm šurb al-fuqqā*’ (60), 13.

though we have scattered evidence from a number of sources, though most of them dating from the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries on, we still do not know how this part of daily life was organized at many places at a given time.<sup>20</sup> The same refers to the production and storage of alcoholic beverages.

As there were beer sellers on the markets, it is likely to assume that beer was also produced at home. We have an indication to this in the above mentioned *ḥadīṭ* of al-ʿĀʾiṣā, where she forbids a beverage made of bread, which could refer to a kitchen or at least a location of baking. And while the above quoted *ahādīṭ* with Abū Ġamīla and Yūnis give evidence for beer on the market, another tradition points out that *fuqqāʾ* was actually produced for Imām al-Kāzīm in his private home (*kāna yuʿmalu li-Abī l-Ḥasani al-fuqqāʾu fī manzilihi*). An information which is promptly followed by the remark that this *fuqqāʾ* would not undergo fermentation (*wa-lā yuʿmalu fuqqāʾun yaḡlī*). In fact, there were alcoholic and non-alcoholic versions of *fuqqāʾ* beer, something which caused a debate when it comes to its classification as *ḥamr* and therefore *ḥarām*.

But even though *ḥadīṭ* may serve as a pool of information on early Islamic daily life, including food and drink, the approach to use these texts in this way has definitely a decisive weakness, which is tightly connected to the problem of authenticity. Neither can we be completely sure which person is responsible for the text, nor can we be certain of the time and place. Some early transmitters settled in other regions like Syria or Iraq already at the end of the Prophet's time or shortly after his death, what leads to the problem of situating a text in a concrete geographical area, if no further information is given in the *matn*. From a radical point of view, the possible vagueness of the *isnād* makes it impossible to refer the information of a *ḥadīṭ* text to a specific time or a specific place. Food and drink production and consumption differed enormously in terms of time and place, even if only taking into account the Arabian Peninsula. We cannot say with 100% security if a certain text really refers to Muḥammad's lifetime and Medina, or if it is a later back projection reflecting much more the transmitter's contemporary setting than the Prophet's. In the end, this methodological problem does not arise only in connection to *ḥadīṭ*, but it is a central issue in any historical research, vividly depicted in the debate on Patricia Crone and the "revisionists".<sup>21</sup> In addition, concentrating on *ḥadīṭ* as source for early beer production and consumption is but a glimpse on early Islamic beer culture.

<sup>20</sup> See for this topic as an example Lewicka 2011:88–119, 351–380, referring, though, to Cairo from the Fāṭimid, and especially the Mamlūk period. On *sūqs* in Baṣra, see Naji and Ali 1981.

<sup>21</sup> See on the 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> century Ḥiǧāzī trade Crone 2004, and, for a summary of the debate Heck 2003.

Despite all of these problems in methodology: *ḥadīth* is one of the few sources we have for the first centuries of Islam. Trying to identify possible time references and geographical settings, on the basis of content, lexicography, and people involved, we still have a considerable amount of information that, in its totality, can give us answers on food and drink during the first centuries of Islamic history. It seems unlikely that this mass of texts on aspects of daily life, be it food and drink, or even discussing cleaning the teeth or shaving pubic hair, was part of a large scale forgery. In fact, it makes this kind of information more likely to be authentic than *ḥadīth* material relating to decisive historical events, regulation of power, or theological and legal disputes.

In order to avoid the methodological problem that *ḥadīth* stands alone as source material, further sources would be necessary for verification and complementation. But the fact, that no relevant archeological or archeobotanical studies are carried out for these centuries on Ḥiǧāzī ground, deprives us of the necessary material and scientific evidence. Arabic papyri, another possible crucial source for daily life, are so far silent when it comes to beer.<sup>22</sup> While one encounters grain, above all, of course, wheat, on numerous occasions, its by-products are comparatively rare. This is not only true for beer, but also for bread.<sup>23</sup> In return, this scarcity of sources for the topic of beer makes *ḥadīth* an even more important source.

### What was beer made of according to *ḥadīth*?

*Ḥadīth* mentions three types of grain for beer production. They are mainly mentioned in the famous “list of five” that defines the basic substances of *ḥamr*. This list is usually introduced with “*al-ḥamru hiya min ḥamsatin*“, or similar formulations. The table below shows only a selection of this enumeration of ingredients<sup>24</sup>:

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<sup>22</sup> This statement is based on a search with the edited Arabic papyri material on the Arabic Papyrology Database (<http://orientw.uzh.ch:8080/apd/project.jsp>). Considering the fact, that out of a rough number of 200.000 Arabic papyri less than 2000 are edited, it is not a definite assessment.

<sup>23</sup> Bread is mentioned, for example, in so called household lists, or lists for (food) rationing for employees or soldiers, see Grohmann 1952:134f.

<sup>24</sup> The table is taken from Brinkmann 2014:89–90.

al-Buḥārī	grape (' <i>inab</i> ), date ( <i>tamr</i> ), honey (' <i>asal</i> ), wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ) <sup>25</sup> raisin ( <i>zabīb</i> ), date ( <i>tamr</i> ), wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ), honey (' <i>asal</i> ) <sup>26</sup>
at-Tirmidī	wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ), date ( <i>tamr</i> ), raisin ( <i>zabīb</i> ), honey (' <i>asal</i> ) <sup>27</sup>
Abū Dāwūd	grape (' <i>inab</i> ), date ( <i>tamr</i> ), honey (' <i>asal</i> ), wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ) <sup>28</sup> grape juice (' <i>aṣīr</i> ), raisin ( <i>zabīb</i> ), date ( <i>tamr</i> ), wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ), sorghum ( <i>ḍura</i> ) <sup>29</sup>
Ibn Māḡa	wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ), raisin ( <i>zabīb</i> ), date ( <i>tamr</i> ), honey (' <i>asal</i> ) <sup>30</sup>
an-Nasā'ī	date ( <i>tamr</i> ), wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ), honey (' <i>asal</i> ), grape (' <i>inab</i> ) <sup>31</sup>
al-Kulaynī	grape juice ( <i>al-'aṣīr min al-karm</i> ), raisin ( <i>an-naqī' min az-zabīb</i> ), honey ( <i>al-bit' min al-'asal</i> ), barley ( <i>al-mizr min aš-ša'ir</i> ), date ( <i>an-nabīḍ min at-tamr</i> ) <sup>32</sup> date ( <i>tamr</i> ), raisin ( <i>zabīb</i> ), wheat ( <i>ḥinṭa</i> ), barley ( <i>ša'ir</i> ), honey (' <i>asal</i> ) <sup>33</sup>
Ibn Bābūya	grape juice (' <i>aṣīr wa-huwa min al-karm</i> ), raisin ( <i>an-naqī' wa-huwa min az-zabīb</i> ), honey ( <i>al-bit' wa-huwa min al-'asal</i> ), barley ( <i>al-mizr wa-huwa min aš-ša'ir</i> ), date ( <i>an-nabīḍ wa-huwa min at-tamr</i> ) <sup>34</sup>

<sup>25</sup> al-Buḥārī, *k. al-ašriba, bāb al-ḥamr min al-'inab* (2), 5640, *bāb mā ḡā'a fī anna l-ḥamr mā ḡāmarā l-'aql min aš-šarāb* (5), 5647.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 5648.

<sup>27</sup> at-Tirmidī, *k. al-ašriba, bāb mā ḡā'a fī l-ḥubūb allatī yuttaḥaḍu minhā l-ḥamr* (8), 1992.

<sup>28</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *k. al-ašriba, bāb fī taḥrīm al-ḥamr* (1), 3671, see also *bāb al-ḥamr mimmā huwa* (4), 3678 with the same ingredients, but here wheat is *burr* instead of *ḥinṭa*.

<sup>29</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *k. al-ašriba, bāb al-ḥamr mimmā huwa* (4), 3679. This is the only enumeration with six substances. The fact that so many lists in the *ḥadīṭ* collections have either five or ten objects has, according to the author's opinion, a mnemotechnical function, not a symbolic one.

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Māḡa, *k. al-ašriba, bāb mā yakūnu minhu l-ḥamr* (5), 3504.

<sup>31</sup> an-Nasā'ī, *k. al-ašriba, bāb ḡikr anwā' al-ašyā' allatī kānat minhā l-ḥamr ḥīna nazala taḥrīmuhā* (20), 5596, 5597, 5598.

<sup>32</sup> al-Kulaynī, *k. al-ašriba, bāb mā yuttaḥaḍu minhu l-ḥamr*, 1 and 3.

<sup>33</sup> al-Kulaynī, *k. al-ašriba, bāb mā yuttaḥaḍu minhu l-ḥamr*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Bābūya, *bāb ḥadd šurb al-ḥamr wa-mā ḡā'a fī l-ḡinā' wa-l-malāḥī* (11), 3.

A typical example in al-Buḥārī is: “*Nazala taḥrīmu l-ḥamri wa-hiya min ḥamsatin: al-‘inabi wa-t-tamri wa-l-‘asali wa-l-ḥinṭati wa-š-ša‘īri wa-l-ḥamru mā ḥāmara al-‘aql.*”<sup>35</sup>

The main grain types are barley and wheat. Sorghum is rarely mentioned in this list of five, but it appears regularly in the context of a beer called *sukurka*, *sukukra*, *suqurqa*, or *ḡubayrā*, which is always specified as an Ethiopian beer.

Having a closer look at these grain types, we have to face the same problem as for many other plant names. Nomenclature differs in terms of time and place. In addition, we sometimes lack precise knowledge on when a specific type of grain was introduced in a given area, or when its cultivation became widespread.

Barley (*ša‘īr*) was apparently not only the first cereal cultivated in southwest Asia and the Middle East, at least around 8000 B.C., but it was also the primary cereal for beer production in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Barley remained the most common cereal in early and medieval Islam. E. Ashtor’s assumption that barley was either given as fodder to the animals, consumed “in times of distress”, or as “food of ascetics” should be met with suspicion (Ashtor 2010). To a certain extent, it might reflect an attitude evident in a number of sources, including the cookery books that do represent a social elite, either political, economic, or cultural. Here, wheat was preferred, while barley considered the cereal of the common people, or even looked at with some contempt. We know much less about the daily life of the common people. Among them, barley was definitely the most prevalent cereal, at least with reference to the Arabian Peninsula (Waines 1987:264). David Waines (2010:26) points out that barley used in bread preparation “formed an essential part of the diet of all but the most well-off of the population”. Barley was, among others, the basis for porridge (*sawīq*), used for baking, and was the main ingredient for a famous condiment in medieval Arab cookery, the *murrī*. *Murrī* was a condiment of fermented barley, that had some soy-sauce-like taste, and its use can be compared to the Roman *garum*, fermented fish sauce.<sup>36</sup> But barley was the primary cereal for beer production in early Islam, too. It is always mentioned in the “list of five”, something that does not apply to wheat, even though wheat is named very often. The appearance of barley in *ḥadīṭ* can give evidence of its importance and widespread use and cultivation in early Islam. Apart from its widespread cultivation and availability, the importance of barley for beer production is due to its comparatively high content of diastase enzymes, responsible for converting starch into sugar which is then turned into alcohol in the course of fermentation. Wheat contains much less diastase enzymes, so that a beer called wheat beer, with an alcohol percentage of more than 3–4%

<sup>35</sup> al-Buḥārī, k. *al-ašriba*, *bāb al-ḥamr min al-‘inab* (2), 5640; see also *ibid.*, 5639, *bāb mā ḡā’a fī anna l-ḥamr mā ḥāmara l-‘aql min aš-šarāb* (5), 5647–48.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Sayyār/Nasrallah 2007 (see index p. 862); Perry 1988; Zaouali 2007:54–56.

(and higher), most probably had barley, too. (Or it was produced together with sugar-containing fruits such as dates, or with honey.) Only light beers could be prepared from wheat alone.

Wheat, in return, was considered the “better” cereal, the more exclusive one. In early Islamic times, wheat was mainly imported to Mecca (via the port Ġidda) and Medina (with al-Ġār as its port) from Egypt, to a lesser extent from other regions.<sup>37</sup> But we cannot yet map the exact differences between *ḥinṭa*, *qamḥ*, and *burr*. Ashtor’s (2010:24) classification should be read critically: “*Qamḥ* is the name for wheat in Syria and in Egypt; in ‘Irāq wheat is called *ḥinṭa* and in Arabia it was called *dhurr*.” But botanic terminology surely was depending on local idioms that, in return, might have changed over time. While the term *qamḥ* definitely dominates Arabic papyri (that is, mainly in Egypt), *ḥinṭa* dominates clearly when it comes to the chapters of beverages in *ḥadīṭ*, supposing “Arabia”<sup>38</sup> as geographical reference. But Arabia is too diverse to be taken as the all-encompassing geographical unit for one lexical term. *Burr* occurs extremely seldom in the chapters on beverages. Even when referring to Yemen in *ḥadīṭ*, wheat is usually *ḥinṭa*; but from the Rasūlīd period (1229–1454), we have sources stating that *burr* was the Yemeni term for wheat.

Apart from such questions of local lexical differences, we do not know whether these terms described actually different varieties of wheat, such as emmer or durum.<sup>39</sup> Neither the diploid einkorn, the first wheat species, nor the tetraploid emmer were favourable for beer production. Emmer has been known in Egypt at least since the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C., from where it spread to Ethiopia. But at the latest during the Ptolemaic period (late 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), durum wheat was introduced and became the dominant type of wheat in Egypt, and subsequently in North Africa and the Near and Middle East. Even though hexaploid bread wheat dominates the world today with approximately 90%, durum is still one of the main cereals in the MENA region. Latest research, including archeobotanical studies, have questioned if not disproved A. Watson’s assumption that hard wheat cannot be documented in Egypt before the Byzantine Empire (van der Veen 2011:141–42; Watson 2001:20). Hexaploid wheat (bread wheat) is known from the 8<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. Western Iran, Northern Iraq and Anatolia. It came to Egypt in the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. and spread from there to neighbouring regions. But we do

<sup>37</sup> As, for example, regions in North Africa, northern Iraq, Syrian provinces of Ḥamā, Ḥimṣ, and Ba‘labakk and Ḥawrān, as well as in the coastal region of Palestine and parts of Yemen, see Ashtor 2010:24.

<sup>38</sup> For a definition see Hoyland 2001:2–8.

<sup>39</sup> On *burr* see also Varisco 1991. He states (p. 15, footnote 75): „The term *burr* or *birr* is the Yemeni variant for wheat. This is a Hebrew cognate also found in Sabaeen dialects.” Abū Ḥanīfa ad-Dīnawarī classifies *burr* as a sub-species of *ḥinṭa*, see ad-Dīnawarī 1953:64, no. 106.

not know whether *qamḥ*, *ḥinṭa*, or *burr*, are actually names for these different varieties of wheat, or whether they all simply designated wheat in different geographical and periodical contexts. Since durum wheat was the dominating wheat type in early and medieval Islam, it seems likely that durum was the main wheat type also used in beer production, even though surely not exclusively.<sup>40</sup>

Another problem poses the term *ḍura* (or *ḍurr*, or *ḍurra*). Whereas Ashtor classifies it as an Arabian term for wheat, it seems more appropriate to connect it to sorghum in the context of beverages in *ḥadīṭ*. Sorghum evolved in the steppes and savannas of central and southern Africa, and it is still the most important crop in sub-Saharan Africa due to its high tolerance of heat and drought. As with wheat, sorghum has a number of species, and their exact history and classification is not clear. Most probably, diploid sorghum came from sub-Saharan Africa to India (according to Andrew M. Watson between 1100 and 800 B.C.), from where a tetraploid version spread again westwards through Iran and Iraq. But the time frame is vague or even unknown. And it cannot be determined if the sorghum in *ḥadīṭ* (and other early Islamic literature) is a diploid type, native in Africa, or a tetraploid type, coming from India. Both species might have existed side by side.<sup>41</sup> Sorghum beer is still produced in parts of Africa, a continent rich in beer. Dates might have been added to the grain mash in Arabia in order to fortify the beer and add to its taste. Even today, bananas are added to sorghum beer in Tanzania to both raise the alcohol content, and improve the taste (Arthur 2003:517).

Terminology only adds to the confusion. In Persian, sorghum was named *ḡāwars hindī*, or *ḡawariš* and *gawariš*, but also *dura* (maybe from Sanskrit *zoorna*); in Arabic it became *ḡāwars hindī*, or *ḍura* (or *ḍurra*). But it is not clear in how far these terms designated different types of sorghum, maybe even a specific *dura*-type (of which archeological evidence is only found much later) (Harlan and De Wet 1972). Watson, following Ibn Waḥṣiyya, classifies *ḡāwars hindī* and *ḍura* as two different varieties of sorghum, while Abū Ḥanīfa ad-Dīnawarī states that *ḍura* would be a variety of cereal (*al-ḥabba*), that is also called *al-ḡārūs al-hindī*, having white (*abyaḍ*) and black (*aswad*) variants (Watson 2008:12, ad-Dīnawarī 1953:183, no. 418). As mentioned earlier, the term *ḍura* in the *ḥadīṭ* chapters on beverages usually refers to a beer from Ethiopia (see below on *sukurka*, or *ḡubayrā*'), or Yemen. It can be assumed that *ḍura* designates

<sup>40</sup> Apart from its adaptation to warm climate, durum had the advantage of having no spelt.

<sup>41</sup> Earliest archeobotanical evidence for sorghum in general comes from India (2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.), earliest archeobotanical findings in Africa are from South Libya (4<sup>th</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C.), Berenike, Qôm el-Nana in the Nile Delta (4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.), and Ethiopia (6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.). Latest from the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. it is known in Yemen where it became an important crop.

sorghum or one of its varieties. *Dura* as a term might occasionally have been used for wheat, too.

### The beers

There is no general term for beer in *ḥadīṭ*. The Arabic *bīra* is obviously a relatively modern loanword, referring to an Old English *bēor*, Old High German *bior*, Middle High German *bier*, and from here to contemporary languages such as English *beer*, German *Bier*, or Italian *birra*. There is discussion as to how closely the Latin noun *biber* (drink) is related to this, which would link beer to the Latin verb *bibere*. It is still uncertain when and where the term *al-bīra* entered the Arabic language.

If alcoholic they are legally classified as *ḥamr*. When it comes to their ingredients, they can be, alcoholic or not, classified as *nabīḍ*, for example *nabīḍ aš-ša'īr*, a barley beer. They are usually described in this way in lexicological works, as well. A third type of denomination is the proper beer names. In *ḥadīṭ* these are: *mizr*, *fuqqā'*, *sukurka* or *ḡubayrā'*, *sawīq*, and *ḡi'a*. Since these are the beers more or less discussed in *ḥadīṭ*, we can at least assume, that they were (among?) the most known and common ones with reference to the relevant time and place, that is the time span from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, with a focus on Ḥiḡāz, Yemen, and Iraq. (When it comes to wine, *ḥadīṭ* shows many references to the Syrian region, aš-Šām, and Yemen.)

Other beer names are not part of the chapters on beverages, such as a beer called *kasīs*, mentioned by Abū Ḥanīfa ad-Dīnawarī. According to Abū Ḥanīfa, this was apparently an alcoholic beer made of *dura* and/or barley and consumed in the Ḥiḡāz. Ibn Durayd, author of the *Ḡamhara fī l-luḡa* from the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D., names a certain *fayḥa* beer, which he holds to be synonymous with *sukurka*, while others classify it above all as beer made of bread (*fayyaḥta l-'aḡīna – ḡa'altahu ka-l-fayḥa*) (Ibn Sīda, *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* XI, 91). The *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* (*ibid.*) has a beer called *kašk*, defined as barley water (*mā' aš-ša'īr*), a beer that is also mentioned by Paulina Lewicka in her study on food and foodways in medieval Cairo, where she dedicates a chapter to the “Beers of Egyptians”, referring above all to source material from the Fāṭimid to the Mamlūk period (Lewicka 2011:487–493). The Egyptian *būza* (*bouza*), which might have originated in Nubia or the Sudan, did not find its way into the *ḥadīṭ* collections.<sup>42</sup> Also, the allusion in al-Buḥārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in the book on beverages, makes a vague reference to “something

<sup>42</sup> Dihḡudā actually names *būzā* (or *buzā*, *būza*) as a synonym of *fuqqā'*, see his entry on *fuqqā'* in the *Luḡatnāma*.



they prepare of rice in Sind” (*šai’un yuṣna’u bi-s-Sindi min ar-ruzz*).<sup>43</sup> Since research on beer is basically absent in Islamic or Arabic Studies, the future might bring more classifications on beer terms to light. More research has been done for the Iranian region in the Islamic period.<sup>44</sup>

### *al-Fuqqā’*

The *fuqqā’* beer is not present in the canonical Sunnī collections, with one exception, al-Buḥārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*. But here, the only tradition mentioning *fuqqā’* refers to honey wine, and does not define *fuqqā’* as a proper beer, that is, a beverage made of cereal (see below). This stands in contrast to the *mizr* beer which appears in a number of Sunnī collections. It is the Šī‘ī collections that specifically mention *fuqqā’*, or even dedicate separate chapters to it. Taken the background of an Iraqi-Iranian based transmitter environment for Šī‘ī *ḥadīṭ* (Newman 2000), this supports other sources, such as Persian lexical works or poetry, giving *fuqqā’* a strong foothold in the Iraq-Iran region.<sup>45</sup>

*Al-fuqqā’* (or *al-fuqā’*, in Persian *fuqā’*, *faqā’*, sometime shortened to *faqa’*) (Šādiqī 1988:39. Farūḥfāl 1988: 87–88) designates most seemingly the bubbles in the beverage, creating foam on top of it.<sup>46</sup> Scholars are at issue if the term *fuqqā’*

<sup>43</sup> al-Buḥārī, k. *al-ašriba*, *bāb mā ḡā’a fī anna l-ḥamr mā ḥāmara l-’aql min aš-šarāb* (5), no. 5647.

<sup>44</sup> In an article on the *fuqqā’* beer, published in 1988, Šādiqī quotes a number of other beer names recorded in dictionaries and other Persian texts (*farhanghā wa-mutūn-i fārsī*) with reference to Iran and Central Asia, such as: 1. *Būza*: Here, *būza* is not mentioned in an Egyptian context, but with reference to Transoxania and India; it is a beer made of barley, sorghum, or rice, with a light alcohol content, but not strong as *ḥamr*, and it is known in Turkish and Mongolian language, as well; 2. *Bangī*: made of barley, rice, or sorghum, also known in Uḡūz and Turkish language; 3. *Baḥsum*: made of wheat or sorghum, sometimes used synonymously with *būza*, known in Turkish language, and maybe originating from Soḡdian; 4. *Šalmāb* (*šalamāb*?): according to some it is made of barley (*āb-i ḡau*, *mā’ aš-ša’ir*), according to others of wheat; 5. *Ġadw* (*gadū*): made of sorghum, in Ḥwārezmian also called *ḡuduk*; 6. *Fūḡān*: synonymous with *fuqqā’*; Šādiqī assumes that the original Arabic term *fuqqā’* led to the Persian loanword of *fūḡān*; 7. *Mirz*: synonymous with *būza*, in the *Tafsīr* of Abū l-Futūḥ ar-Rāzī made of sorghum (*ḡāwarz*), in correct Arabic: *mizr*; 8. *Mawwīz āb*: made of raisins, according to Dihḡudā a synonym of *fuqqā’* or *būzā/būza*. In addition to these eight beer designations, Šādiqī names five further beverages made of cereals, which are, though, mainly consumed in Buḥārā: *sab sum*, *sab sis* or *siš*, *ḥasma*, *aḡradḡū* (*aḡradḡū*), *baḥsī* (most probably synonymous with *baḥsum*, see above). Šādiqī 1988: 39–40.

<sup>45</sup> The reasons why and how *fuqqā’* became registered in lexicographic works still needs to be investigated.

<sup>46</sup> *Lisān al-’arab* under *fuqqā’* and *faqāqī’*. Steingass 2006 under *faqqā’a*, *faqāqī’*. See also Ibn Sīda, *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* XI, 91.

is a loanword from Persian *fūḡān*, or, if *fūḡān* is a loanword from the original Arabic *fuqqā'*, or *fuqā'*.<sup>47</sup> In the sense of a carbonated beverage, the Persian *fuqā'* *guṣūdan* could also designate the moment when its vessel is opened and the gas escapes. And even though this could be applied to other carbonated beverages as well, sources mainly mention it in the context of beers.<sup>48</sup>

*Fuqqā'* was primarily made of barley.<sup>49</sup> But as it was quite common with beers in general, other ingredients might have been added, and whatever cereal was available, or considered better, could have been used. In addition, we can observe the general tendency that simple recipes from early Islamic times underwent some kind of refinement in the following decades and centuries of urbanization and court culture, such as it is with the famous dish *tarīd*. In this way, even a simple barley beer found its way into the 10<sup>th</sup> century Arabic cookery book from Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq, giving the instruction for how to produce this *fuqqā'* beer, followed by a number of refining recipes (Ibn Sayyār/Nasrallah 2007:453–459). We encounter a number of *fuqqā'* recipes in different sources adding mint, spices, raisins, dates, honey, rice, and other possible ingredients. N. Nasrallah stresses that *fuqqā'* is an alcohol free beer, “a bubbly drink made from barley. It is usually served before the meal, unlike wine, which is served after the meal” (Ibn Sayyār/Nasrallah 2007:551. Šādiqī 1988:38).

Furthermore, the term *fuqqā'* could be applied to a beverage completely without barley, or even any kind of cereal. Šādiqī mentions, for example, that a beverage made of boiled grapes would be called *fuqqā'* in Ḥurāsān. And some of Ibn Sayyār's *fuqqā'* recipes have no grain at all. Finally, also Dihhudā adds that *fuqqā'* would be a beer made of barley, or raisins, or other ingredients.<sup>50</sup> In the *ḥadīṭ* texts, *fuqqā'* appears nearly exclusively as simple (grain) beer, with one exception. An interesting transfer from the beer, made of cereal, to a honey wine can be observed in a few sources, including *ḥadīṭ*. *Fuqqā'* is mentioned in al-Buḥārī's collection under the chapter on honey wine, *bāb al-ḥamr min al-'asal wa-huwa al-bit'* (in the *kitāb al-aṣriba*). But here, the first tradition does not refer to the common term for honey wine, *bit'*, but to *fuqqā'*: “And Ma'n said: ‘I asked Mālik b. Anas about the *fuqqā'*, and he answered: If it does not intoxicate, there

<sup>47</sup> Steingass and Šādiqī vote for the latter, while Dihhudā holds the view of the former, see Steingass 2006 on *fūḡān*, *fuqā'*, *faqqā'at*, *fuqā'guṣūdan*, *fuqā'ī*. Šādiqī 1988:40.

<sup>48</sup> Kazimirski 1860: II, 621 on *fuqqā'*.

<sup>49</sup> See *Lisān al-'arab* on *fuqqā'*; Schlimmer 1874:75 (*āb-i ḡau*, *ṣarāb-i ḡau*); Maurizio (1970:122) identifies the beer Fogga, or Fokka, with the Zythos-beer, already mentioned in the Talmud, cf. Lutz 1922:93.

<sup>50</sup> Ishāq b. Sulaymān al-Isrā'īlī (9.-10. century), *kitāb al-aḡḍiyya wa-l-adwiyya*, in Lewicka 2011:468. See on different additions to the barley beer: Šādiqī 1988:38, 40. *Luḡatnāma* on *fuqā'*.

is no harm (*lā ba's*).’’<sup>51</sup> This is the only reference to *fuqqā'* in the canonical Sunnī collections, and it classifies *fuqqā'* apparently as honey wine, without giving further information. The same linguistic usage can be found in the Cairo Geniza documents; S. D. Goitein mentions a honey wine called *fuqqā'*:

“Take fifteen pounds of honey and put on it one pound of *dādhī*. Stir it up every day until it loses the taste of honey. Then take it, clarify it, put it into a gl[ass] vessel [and pour] over each pound of honey three pounds of water.” (This recipe supposedly comes from Aden.) And Goitein adds: “This alcoholic honey wine is the honey sherbet, the *fuqqā'*, which God has permitted [to drink]”. Jews were trading this honey wine in Egypt, and producing it, among others, in the Tunisian al-Mahdiyya (Goitein 1983:260–261).

Al-Kulaynī's *Kāfī* and other sources give evidence for the strong presence of *fuqqā'* beer in Iraq and Iran. The earliest evidence for *fuqqā'* in Egypt dates from Fāṭimid times on (10<sup>th</sup> century), either in government prohibitions or travelers' observations.

From all the beer names *ḥadīṭ* offers, there is only one, the *fuqqā'* beer, which we can connect to a specific vessel: *kūz al-fuqqā'* (*kūz*, pl. *kīzān*), or in Persian: *kūz-i fuqā'*. This vessel appears in a number of sources, but scholars are obviously at issue when it comes to its form. In 1992, an article by A. Gouchani and C. Adle describes the *kūz al-fuqqā'* as a small, clay sphero-conical vessel, with an average height of 15 cm, and a diameter of 12 cm (even though other sizes exist, too). It has a short neck, which was usually closed with skin. Some have inscriptions indicating that the content was indeed a beverage – an important clue since some scholars have identified these vessels as perfume vessels, or even containers for explosives. Archeological evidence reaches from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D., from Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran to Afghanistan and Central Asia. In her edition of Ibn Sayyār's cookery book, Nawal Nasrallah defines this *kūz*, though, as “cup with a handle but no spout” (Ibn Sayyār/Nasrallah 2007:687). Besides clay, she mentions metal and wood as material. David Waines has them as “long and narrow vessels [...] often fitted with a handle“, and he quotes Goitein translating *kīzān* as “bowl”.<sup>52</sup> *Ḥadīṭ* does not give us clear evidence for this kind of vessel.

Some beers, and this applies to *fuqqā'* as well as to others, certainly had alcoholic and alcohol-free versions. The very fact that beers could have such a low alcohol percentage, led to a certain insecurity as to how far they could still be considered *ḥalāl*.

As alcoholic beer, *fuqqā'* was prohibited from time to time in Egypt, as for example, by the Fāṭimid ruler al-Ḥākim bi-Amrillāh (ruled 996–1021), or the

<sup>51</sup> al-Buḥārī, *k. al-aṣṣriba, bāb al-ḥamr min al-'asal* (4).

<sup>52</sup> Waines 2010:133. Compare the images of vessels in Homan 2004:87, 89.

Mamlūk ruler az-Zāhir Baybars who banned this beer in 663/1265; but most of the times during the first centuries of Islam, high taxes were levied on *fuqqā'* business (and that of other beers). Unfortunately, we are not informed in detail about the beer consumption of the common people about which the sources are often silent. City chronicles or travel accounts can give an idea about daily consumption, but it requires more future research to establish a clearer image of the beer consumption among the average population.<sup>53</sup>

*Hadīṭ* supports the assumption of a mainly alcoholic *fuqqā'*, with some alcohol-free variants. Most traditions treat it as intoxicating and put it thereby legally on the same level as *ḥamr*. In al-Kulaynī's *Kāfī*, *fuqqā'*, to which al-Kulaynī dedicates a whole sub-chapter (*bāb al-fuqqā'*), is treated consistently as intoxicating and therefore *ḥarām*. *Fuqqā'* is either one of the beverages defined as *ḥamr* (*fa-innahu min al-ḥamr*), or it is simply equated with *ḥamr* (*huwa l-ḥamru bi-'aynihi*). When asked about *fuqqā'*, the Imāms usually would reply that it is *ḥarām* and deserves the same punishment as consumption of *ḥamr*.<sup>54</sup> The narrative *ḥadīṭ* quoted above, where Abū Ḡamīla al-Baṣrī and Yūnis were on a market in Baḡdād, and Yūnis got splashes of *fuqqā'* beer on his clothes in the moment the *fuqqā'* vendor opened a *fuqqā'* vessel, represents the reading of *fuqqā'* as alcoholic. It led to the debate, in how far Yūnis is legally entitled to perform the prayer.<sup>55</sup>

While the *Kāfī* treats *fuqqā'* as alcoholic, aṭ-Ṭūsī's *Istibṣār* gives evidence that alcohol-free versions existed as well. *Fuqqā'* was apparently prepared in the 7<sup>th</sup> Imām's home (*fī manzilihi*), a fact complemented by the note that this *fuqqā'* would not ferment (*lā yaḡlī*).<sup>56</sup> Another time, 'Alī b. Yaḡfīn asked Abū l-Ḥasan [Mūsā al-Kāzīm] about the consumption of *fuqqā'* that is produced and sold on the market (*sa'altuhu 'an šurbi l-fuqqā'i llaḏī yu'malu fī s-sūqi wa-yubā'u*). "I do not know how it is prepared or when it is prepared – is it permissible for me to drink it?" And the Imām answers that he does not approve it (*lā uḥibbuhu*).<sup>57</sup> This

<sup>53</sup> Such as the observation noted down by Nāṣir-i Ḥusraw who observed in 439/1948 that Cairo's inhabitants would not consume alcoholic *fuqqā'*, see: Ḥusraw 1373:78f. See the important works of Lewicka 2005 and 2011.

<sup>54</sup> al-Kulaynī, *k. al-aṣriba, bāb al-fuqqā'*, 8; see also aṭ-Ṭūsī, *k. al-aṭ'ima wa-l-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm šurb al-fuqqā'*, 1–9.

<sup>55</sup> Here, aṭ-Ṭūsī supports the need to wash the clothes before the prayer, while Ibn Bābūya stresses that Yūnis could perform the prayer (*lā ba's*) because "God has forbidden drinking it, but has not forbidden the prayer in clothes that are contaminated by wine". aṭ-Ṭūsī, *k. al-aṭ'ima wa-l-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm al-fuqqā'* (60), 10, and Ibn Bābūya, *bāb ḥadd šurb al-ḥamr wa-mā ḡā'a fī l-ḡinā' wa-l-malāhī* (11), 4.

<sup>56</sup> aṭ-Ṭūsī, *k. al-aṭ'ima wa-l-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm šurb al-fuqqā'*, 11.

<sup>57</sup> aṭ-Ṭūsī, *k. al-aṭ'ima wa-l-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm šurb al-fuqqā'*, 13.

does not imply a general prohibition but shows the caution to buy *fuqqā'* from somebody whose procedure of *fuqqā'* preparation one cannot judge.

*Ḥadīṭ* does not supply us with closer information on how *fuqqā'* was actually prepared. It was important to state that alcoholic *fuqqā'* was part of the prohibition of intoxicating beverages, and that such drinks, whether prepared of barley, wheat or sorghum, fell under the legal *ḥamr* prohibition. Fermentation was given as borderline between *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, and this was the main message of these texts. Such a selective character recalls sources on Sumerian beer – even though much more numerous and informative on distribution and amounts produced, they are also lacking in information on the actual production. “Hundreds of such texts document more or less explicitly administrative activities performed in the context of the production, distribution, and consumption of beer, although the information they provide is specifically restricted. They were written for people who knew the context of beer production and distribution and not to inform modern readers about these processes. They contain detailed records of the required raw materials, of the amounts of beer produced, and of economic transactions such as the delivery of raw materials and the disbursement of beer products but not, however, about the real activities performed in brewing processes.” (Damerow 2012).

This silence in the source material does not imply that people did not discuss matters of beer preparation. We get an idea that this was actually happening also in the context of *fuqqā'* from a correspondence of a certain 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad ar-Rāzī with the 9<sup>th</sup> Imām, Abū Ġa'far al-Ġawwād: “I have taken notice that you have explained the *fuqqā'* to me because we are in doubt on it. Is it *makrūh* only after fermentation or even before it?” To this the Imām answered (*fa-kataba ilayhi*) that *fuqqā'* should not be drunk from damaged vessels. Questioning the level of damage (*ḍarāra*) and being new (*ḡadīd*), 'Abd Allāh asked in how far it would be permissible to drink from vessels made of *ḡadāra* clay<sup>58</sup>, glass (*zuḡāḡ*), wood (*ḥaṣab*) or the like. The Imām answered: “*Fuqqā'* can be prepared in glass vessels and those of fired clay (*faḥār*), using these not more than three times.” After these three times of preparation, one should not use them any longer but choose new vessels instead.<sup>59</sup> Even though we are still left in the dark when it comes to the proper *fuqqā'* preparation after this *ḥadīṭ*, we get a glimpse that such things were discussed, apparently even in letters, and that certain instructions were given when it comes to the use of vessels. Such instructions to clean vessels regularly, or to switch them, can be found in other chapters in the *ḥadīṭ* collections, too, showing the awareness that dregs and remainders in vessels could cause, or intensify fermentation.

<sup>58</sup> Green and/or dark clay, without salt earth.

<sup>59</sup> at-Ṭūsī, *k. al-at'ima wa-l-ašriba, bāb taḥrīm šurb al-fuqqā'*, 12.

On the whole, *fuqqā'* became forbidden in Ġa'farī law, pointing at its alcoholic character. But a few samples show, that alcohol-free versions were known. And in fact, a certain type of *fuqqā'* was permissible in the Sunnī law schools, and it was consumed even at the end of Ramaḍān.<sup>60</sup> To draw the conclusion, however, that *fuqqā'* must have been alcohol-free, because we have evidence that it was drunk by Muslims, is a rather modern interpretation.<sup>61</sup>

### *Mizr*

While *ḥadīt* shows a geographical Iraq-Iran orientation with reference to *fuqqā'* (even though it was known in Egypt, as well) *mizr* became somehow the Egyptian beer par excellence. While some state that *mizr* beer was foremost a beer made of wheat, one has to correct this assumption by adding that this is valid for Egypt, where wheat was a dominant crop.<sup>62</sup> The *mizr* beer appearing in the Geniza documents was most likely a wheat beer and, according to Goitein, popular among the Jews in Egypt. He adds: "We hear again about *mizr* from Acre (Akko) in Crusader times when [...] shellfish gatherers from Alexandria were reported there for drinking it in a tavern of bad repute. [...] I have not found that beverage mentioned elsewhere; it was probably popular in circles not much represented in the Geniza" (Goitein 1983:261). Abū Ḥanīfa ad-Dīnawarī defines *mizr* in the 9<sup>th</sup> century as a beer made of wheat (Ibn Sīda, *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* XI, 91).

But to limit *mizr* to wheat and Egypt is not justified in the context of the history of *mizr* and other regions where *mizr* was produced. Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-'arab* (13<sup>th</sup> century) defines *mizr* as *nabīḍ* made of barley (*ša'īr*), wheat (*ḥinṭa*), or other ingredients. Some claim it to be foremost a beer of sorghum (*ḍura*), and Abū 'Ubayd is quoted that *bit'* would be a *nabīḍ* made of honey (*'asal*), *ḡi'a* a *nabīḍ* of barley (*ša'īr*), *mizr* of sorghum (*ḍura*), *sakar* made of dates (*tamr*), and *ḥamr* made of grapes (*'inab*). In Fīrūzābādī's *Qāmūs* (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century), *mizr* is said to be a *nabīḍ* of sorghum? (*ḍura*) and barley (*ša'īr*).

Concerning the term *ḍura* we might encounter the problem, that it may partly have been applied to wheat, too. In *ḥadīt*, though, beer of *ḍura* is sometimes presented as different from beer made from wheat, *ḍura* and *ḥinṭa* named side by

<sup>60</sup> See *Luḡatnāma* on *fuqqā'*, and Šādiqī 1988:38. See also Lewicka 2011:469, giving from the 14<sup>th</sup> century Egyptian Ibn al-Uḥuwwa's *ḥisba* manual two recipes for the alcohol-free *fuqqā'* variants, *ḥāṣṣ* and *ḥarḡī*.

<sup>61</sup> See for this discussion also Šādiqī 1988:38. Šādiqī classifies *fuqqā'* as mainly alcohol-free beverage, with a few exceptions.

<sup>62</sup> As such it appears in Lewicka 2011:487ff. But note that in her article Lewicka (2005:72) defines it as beer made of barley. Cf. Biesterfeldt 2012:383. Lutz 1922:95, refers to Ibn Bayṭār, and states that *mizr* "was the national drink of Egypt long after it had embraced Islam".

side, each being the basic ingredient for a special type of beer. These two terms either designated two different varieties of wheat, or they designated two different types of grain, namely sorghum and wheat. Owing to the mention of *ḥinṭa* and *ḍura* as two main ingredients for (alcoholic) beverages in *ḥadīṭ* and due to the close connection of *ḍura* to the Ethiopian beer *sukurka*, which was of sorghum, it can be assumed, that *ḍura* in *ḥadīṭ* refers in fact to sorghum, not to wheat.

Other sources link *mizr* beer clearly to South Arabia, and specifically Yemen. Alongside barley beer, *mizr* of *ḍura* was known in pre-Islamic South Arabia.<sup>63</sup> In Islamic times *mizr* of *ḍura* could apparently be used synonymously with *sukurka* (or *ḡubayrā'*), a *ḍura* beer known from the Abyssinians (*min al-ḥabaša*).

*Ḥadīṭ* supports the definition of *mizr* as made of barley or sorghum (*ḍura*), placing it mainly in a Yemenite context. In Muslim's collection, Abū Burda relates from his father, Abū Mūsā al-Aṣ'arī, that he and Mu'āḍ were sent to Yemen by the Prophet Muḥammad. There, they encountered two beverages, *bit'* made of honey (*'asal*), and *mizr* made of *ḍura* and barley (*ša'ir*). Both were prepared in a way that they "get strong" (*yunbaḍu ḥattā yaštadda*), that is, fermented and got intoxicating.<sup>64</sup> This tradition is recorded in many *ḥadīṭ* collections.<sup>65</sup> In a variant version in Abū Dāwūd's *Sunan*, Abū Mūsā asked the Prophet about the intoxicating beverage made of honey, and the Prophet identified it as *bit'*. When Abū Mūsā asked about a *nabīḍ* prepared of barley (*ša'ir*) and sorghum (*ḍura*), the Prophet is said to have answered: "This is *mizr*."<sup>66</sup>

In other versions transmitted in Muslim's collection by Abū Burda's son, Sa'īd b. Abī Burda, *mizr* is exclusively made of barley.<sup>67</sup> Other collections include this tradition, too. The *Kāfī* has two traditions defining *mizr* as barley beer: "*al-ḥamr* is made of five [things]: *al-aṣīr* is of grapes, *an-naqī'* is of raisins, *al-bit'* is of honey, *al-mizr* is of barley, and *an-nabīḍ* is of dates".<sup>68</sup> (A third tradition adds *mizr* as beer of wheat, *ḥinṭa*.)

A third group of traditions identifies *mizr* as a beverage exclusively made of sorghum (*ḍura*). One day, the Prophet met someone from the Yemenite Ḡayṣān who asked him about the beverage *mizr*, made of sorghum, and consumed in their

<sup>63</sup> Maraqtan 1993:98. In addition, he mentions a Sabaic inscription where *mizr* was made of dates.

<sup>64</sup> Muslim, k. *al-aṣriba*, bāb bayān anna kull muskir ḥamr wa-anna kull ḥamr ḥarām (7), 5334.

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. an-Nasā'ī, k. *al-aṣriba*, bāb tafsīr al-bit' wa-l-mizr, 5621, 5622, 5623.

<sup>66</sup> Abū Dāwūd, k. *al-aṣriba*, bāb an-nahy min al-muskir (5), 3686.

<sup>67</sup> Muslim, k. *al-aṣriba*, bāb bayān anna kull muskir ḥamr wa-anna kull ḥamr ḥarām (7), 5332, 5333.

<sup>68</sup> al-Kulaynī, k. *al-aṣriba*, bāb mā yuttaḥaḍu minhu l-ḥamr, 1, 3. See also Ibn Bābūya, bāb ḥadd šurb al-ḥamr wa-mā ḡā'a fī l-ḡinā' wa-l-malāhī (11), 3. al-Muqrī 2007:38, where *mizr* is made of barely, not of *ḍura*.

region (*bi-arḍihim*). When the Prophet got to know that this *mizr* was intoxicating, he said that *kullu muskirin ḥarāmūn*, everything intoxicating is prohibited.<sup>69</sup>

The *ḥadīṭ* texts support, together with other sources, that a beer called *mizr* was prominent in Yemen at the time of the Prophet, and its name appears already in pre-Islamic inscriptions. As far as we know at this point, *mizr* beer became famous only later in Egypt. While being mainly a beer of barley and sorghum in Yemen, it became known as a wheat beer in Egypt. P. Lewicka (2011:487) holds it possible that *mizr* beer came from Yemen to Egypt with the first Islamic armies from Yemen. Maybe the soldiers who settled in al-Fustāt after the conquest of Egypt from 21/642 brought their Yemeni tradition to Egypt and made it part of Egypt's drinking culture. In order to reconstruct this possible influence further research would be necessary in order to map the linguistic appearance and use of *mizr* in connection to agriculture.

Different from *fuqqā'*, where we have a discussion on its alcoholic or non-alcoholic nature, *mizr* was apparently classified as alcoholic and therefore a forbidden beverage.

#### ***Sukurka (suqurqu', suqruqa') or ġubayrā'***

In *ḥadīṭ* and other sources, *sukurka* is tightly connected to the Abyssinians and is said to be an intoxicating beer based on sorghum (*ḍura*). *Lisān al-'arab* states that *sukurka*, or *suqurqu'*, is "the wine (*ḥamr*) of the Abyssinians, which is made of *ḍura* and intoxicating".<sup>70</sup> *Ġubayrā'* is mentioned either as a synonym of *sukurka* beer, or as fruit of the tree *ġabrā'*. Abū Ḥanīfa also calls the tree *ġubayrā'*. And the philologist Ṭa'lab (d. 291/904) defines *ġubayrā'* as a wine (*ḥamr*) made of the *ġubayrā'* fruit. In general, *ġubayrā'* may designate either the fruit or the tree.<sup>71</sup>

In any case, *sukurka* was an Arabised, originally Abyssinian word. The reference in *ḥadīṭ* is with the Abyssinians (*min al-ḥabaša*), not with a geographical region. It is usually made of *ḍura*. A typical example may be found in Abū Dāwūd's collection: "*Al-ġubayrā'* is *as-sukurka*, made of *ḍura*, an [intoxicating] beverage that the Abyssinians prepare."<sup>72</sup> And in a tradition recorded in the *Muwaṭṭa'*, the Prophet forbade *ġubayrā'* and, when asked by Zayd b. Aslam what *ġubayrā'* actually is, he simply answered: "It is *as-sukurka*."<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Muslim, *k. al-aṣriba, bāb bayān anna kull muskir ḥamr wa-anna kull ḥamr ḥarām* (7), 5335. See also an-Nasā'ī, *k. al-aṣriba, bāb ḍikr mā a'adda Allāh 'azza wa-ġalla li-ṣārib al-muskir min al-ḍull wa-l-hawān wa-alīm al-'aḍāb* (49), 5727.

<sup>70</sup> *Lisān al-'arab* on *sukurka*.

<sup>71</sup> See the entries on *sukurka* and *ġubayrā'* and *ġabrā'* in *Lisān al-'arab*.

<sup>72</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *k. al-aṣriba, bāb an-naḥy 'an al-muskir* (5), 3687.

<sup>73</sup> *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, *k. al-aṣriba, bāb taḥrīm al-ḥamr* (4), 1549.



While the names *sukurka* or *gubayrā* are usually connected to a beer made of *dura* by the Abyssinians, this beer was sometimes equated with *mizr* in Yemen. As to the reason for this, we can only speculate at this time. Perhaps *mizr* was the locally known beer in South Arabia, often made of *dura*. In the course of the close contacts between the Aksumite Empire and Yemen, either through trade or settlements, and later trade connections between Ethiopia, Yemen, but also the Ḥiǧāz, the name of this Abyssinian beer found its way into the Arabic language. And the fact that it was a beer made of sorghum caused it to be used synonymously with *mizr*, a previously known *dura* beer. In the *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* we find the information that *suqurqu* (or *suqurqa*) was known among the Ḥiǧāzī population, a further evidence for the connections between Abyssinia and the eastern coast of the Red Sea. It was known through trade, direct political rule, immigration, or even through Abyssinian slaves on the Arabian Peninsula. These political, economic, and cultural contacts over the Red Sea have recently gained more attention<sup>74</sup>, and *ḥadīṭ* can surely add to our attempt to reconstruct these exchanges of the first centuries of Islam.

### *Sawīq*

In contrast to the previously mentioned beers, *sawīq* can be both a beer and food (if one does not take into account the fact that beer has been considered as food for centuries). As with the other beers, *sawīq* could be prepared of both barley and wheat, while the most common basis was barley.

As food, *sawīq* was some kind of porridge, mentioned in a number of *ḥadīṭ* chapters, such as *kitāb al-aṭ'ima*, *aṭ-tahāra*, *al-wuḍū'*, *an-nikāḥ*, *aṭ-ṭalāq*, *al-maǧāzī*, *al-ǧihād*, in short, it was a widespread staple dish. In *ḥadīṭ*, it often appears alongside the date, eaten on private invitations, or marriage festivities. As with many other, formerly simple dishes from the time of the Prophet and his environment, *sawīq*, as well as the dish *ṭarīd*, underwent some kind of refinement under the Umayyad, and above all during the Abbasid period. While originally made of barley and, to a lesser extent, wheat, we find later *sawīq* varieties in *ḥadīṭ* and other sources with different ingredients. Al-Kulaynī has a *sawīq* of lentils ('*adas*') in his *kitāb al-aṭ'ima*<sup>75</sup>, and *Lisān al-'arab* has a *sawīq* made of almonds. *Sawīq* could be prepared for travels. In this case, the grain was dried after treatment, and whenever needed, water or milk was added. In more refined contexts, barley was substituted by wheat, and one could add sugar, pomegranate,

<sup>74</sup> See The Red Sea Project at Durham University, [www.dur.ac.uk/mlac/arabic/red sea](http://www.dur.ac.uk/mlac/arabic/red%20sea) (last consulted: August 2014)

<sup>75</sup> al-Kulaynī, k. *al-aṭ'ima*, *bāb sawīq al-'adas*. See the chapter before: *bāb al-aswiqa wa-faḍl sawīq al-ḥinṭa*.

or other further ingredients. David Waines mentions *sawīq* as a dish, but he does not include *sawīq* in his entry on beers, where he refers to *mizr*, *ǧā'a* (*sic*), *būza*, *fuqqā'*, and *aqsimā* (Waines 2010:133).

It is also true that in *ḥadīṭ*, *sawīq* is most prominent as a dish. But one encounters *sawīq* as beer, as well, and the difference between these two was at times apparently vague. Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 296/908–909) recorded it in his *Fuṣūl at-tamāṭīl fī tabāšīr as-surūr* as one of the names for wine (*asmā' al-ḥumūr*), alongside the *sukurka*.<sup>76</sup>

As beverage, *sawīq* meant first of all some kind of beer made of barley (*ša'īr*) or wheat (*ḥinṭa*). But from here, one can observe a semantic transfer, namely to beverages made of grapes. *Lisān al-'arab* states that *sawīq* is something made of wheat (*ḥinṭa*) or barley (*ša'īr*), and adds that a *sawīq* made of grapes would be *ḥamr* (*sawīqu l-karmi al-ḥamru*). Fredrick Lutz writes: „The *sawīq* (سويق), a particularly favored drink, seems to have been quite harmless. It was a barley-water, which was imbibed from the vessel by means of straw, and was generally drunk by sick persons” (Lutz 1922:95).

In fact it seems, that *sawīq* was a beverage with either very low or no alcohol content. As with the barley cake mentioned by David Waines, the procedure of soaking the grain, drying it, and roasting it, made *sawīq* a proper drink for travels. It was mixed with water, and maybe other ingredients, as a refreshing drink. It appears in Ibn Sayyār's 10<sup>th</sup> century cookery book, where the editor Nawal Nasrallah writes in her glossary (2007:555): “[S]*awīq* (سويق) refreshing and nourishing drink usually made from ground toasted grains, nuts, sugar, and water. Men are urged not to let their wives drink *sawīq*, and if they do, they need to keep an eye on them because *sawīq* makes women gain weight and become beautiful and lusty (ad-Dīnawarī, 'Uyūn al-Akḥbār, 349).”

Facing the possible danger of an alcoholic beer, it seems that some people still inquired about the permissibility of *sawīq*, and Ubayy b. Ka'b recommends: “Drink water (*al-mā'*), drink honey (*al-'asal*), drink *sawīq*, and drink milk (*al-laban*).”<sup>77</sup>

As a beverage it appears in *ḥadīṭ*, but usually without further explanation about what it actually is. We can only assume that it was a drink, since it was drunk (*šariba*), but here, we encounter the vague difference between beverage and food, since *sawīq* could also be prepared as some kind of soup, too, and in this case, it could be drunk.<sup>78</sup> Reading the passages on *sawīq* in the *Kāfī*, it becomes obvious that *sawīq* was at times eaten, and at times drunk – either as a beverage, or as a

<sup>76</sup> MS Leipzig University Library, Vollers 512, f. 40v.

<sup>77</sup> an-Nasā'ī, k. *al-ašriba*, *bāb ḍikr al-ašriba al-mubāḥa* (58), 5772.

<sup>78</sup> As, e.g., in an-Nasā'ī, k. *aṣ-ṣiyyām*, *bāb as-suḥūr bi-s-sawīq wa-t-tamr* (28), 2179 (*šaribtu šarbata sawīqin*).

soup. “*Iṣrab sawīqa l-’adas*” – “drink the lentil *sawīq*”, is recommended in the *Kāfi* because it is supposed to quench the thirst and strengthen the stomach.<sup>79</sup> Other traditions recommend drinking *sawīq* made of wheat for 40 days<sup>80</sup>, or drinking *sawīq* with oil (*šurbu s-sawīqi bi-z-zayti*).<sup>81</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> Imām, Abū l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā, praised the *sawīq*: “What an excellent food (*qūt*) this *sawīq* is! When hungry, it satisfies you, and when you are full, it helps you to digest.”<sup>82</sup>

In fact, according to the 6<sup>th</sup> Imām, Ḡa’far aṣ-Ṣādiq, *sawīq* is the food of the prophets, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Imām adds: “It was sent through divine revelation from the Heavens (*innamā unzila s-sawīqu bi-l-wahyi min as-samā’i*).”<sup>83</sup>

### Ḡi’a

The *ḡi’a* beer is hardly mentioned in *ḥadīṭ*. Originally, *ḡi’a* was a beer made of barley (as most beers were), while wheat might have been used, too, depending on time and location. Abū Ḥanīfa defined it as barely beer (Ibn Sīda, *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* XI, 91). According to *Lisān al-’arab*, it was alcoholic: “*nabīḍu ša’irīn [...]* *šarābun yuttaḥaḍu min aš-ša’iri wa-l-ḥinṭati ḥattā yuskiru*.”<sup>84</sup> This beer, that David Waines most probably intended with the spelling “*jā’a*” (Waines 2010:133), is not further explained in *ḥadīṭ*. Abū Dāwūd mentions it simply in the context of vessels,<sup>85</sup> while we find support for *ḡi’a* as barley beer in an-Nasā’ī, where it is recorded in the chapter *an-nahy ‘an nabīḍ al-ḡi’a wa-huwa šarābun yuttaḥaḍu min aš-ša’ir*.<sup>86</sup>

### Conclusion

There seems to have been some kind of confusion concerning beer, be that in terms of ingredients or terminology. In this respect, beer does not differ from other beverages, but this is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>87</sup> Local availability of grains, language use, and some kind of culturally determined taste were reasons for the vagueness of many beer names. While the future will hopefully bring forth more results on beer culture and terminology, *ḥadīṭ* is but a first step. And while

<sup>79</sup> al-Kulaynī, *k. al-aṭ’ima, bāb sawīq al-’adas*, 3.

<sup>80</sup> al-Kulaynī, *k. al-aṭ’ima, bāb al-aswiqa wa-faḍl sawīq al-ḥinṭa*, 12.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 4 and 5.

<sup>84</sup> *Lisān al-’arab* on ḡ’h and ḡ’w

<sup>85</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *k. al-aṣriba, bāb fī l-aw’iya* (7), 3699.

<sup>86</sup> an-Nasā’ī, *k. al-aṣriba, bāb an-nahy ‘an nabīḍ al-ḡi’a wa-huwa šarābun yuttaḥaḍu min aš-ša’ir* (26).

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Brinkmann 2014, al-Muqrī 2007:19–28.

*ḥadīṭ* can serve as a source for material culture of the first decades and centuries of Islamic history, as it has done for the purpose of this survey, it might be approached from a literary and discourse-oriented perspective, as well, as shown in the study of Kathryn Kueny (2001). As shown above, *ḥadīṭ* literature is a negotiation to define new norms, or modify or confirm existing ones for the early Muslim community. As such, it gives us information about existing habits when it comes to food and drink, while at the same time being selective and sometimes vague when it comes to concrete time and place references.

A history of beer culture in the Islamic world has still to be written. Paulina Lewicka has dedicated some attention to it for the Fāṭimid and Mamlūk periods, and there are glimpses here and there in other publications that beer was consumed, be it under Qajar rule in Iran, or in the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century on, where beer factories such as the Bomonti beer factory, were founded. And even today, beer forms part of the drinking culture. Nadim Khoury is owner of the Taybeh brewery in the West Bank, where he produces a number of alcoholic beers according to the *deutsche Reinheitsgebot*.<sup>88</sup> Muslims abstaining from alcohol can simply order his alcohol-free version.

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<sup>88</sup> German Beer Purity Law, or Bavarian Purity Law. It is a regulation concerning the production of beer in the Holy Roman Empire and its successor state, Germany.

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