

**Faculty of Humanities
School of Design and Art**

**An In-Depth Investigation into the Traditional Design of Omani Khanjar
(Dagger)**

Khalid Hilal Zahir Al Busaidi

**This thesis is presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of
Curtin University**

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature: 

Date: 25 November 2014

Abstract

The Omani khanjar is a traditional decorated dagger that has been central to the social customs and national identity of Omani society. The researcher identifies the changes in the global economy and the rapid transition from tradition to modernity in Oman which has created a moment in which the traditional practices in making and using the khanjar are under threat. The author conducted an extensive series of interviews and surveys to gather data, and has recorded the processes of manufacturing photographically.

The dissertation, in the form of a report, contextualizes the khanjar historically and socially filling the existing research gap, before establishing a typology of its parts. The main body of the dissertation records for the first time, the processes of manufacture of the khanjar with the intention of logging this process before it becomes extinct. Extensive contextualizing of material is recorded in the appendices.

The outcomes of the research, a history and record of making of the khanjar that have been previously unrecorded, has been disseminated via publically accessible websites.

The dissertation concludes with the recommendations that would help the continuation of the khanjar tradition. The set of the recommendations is in two parts, the first part addressing the working conditions and education of the craftsmen who make khanjar and the second part is addressing the Omani institutional and educational infrastructure to support the same.

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Introduction

Oman is one of the oldest Arab countries, having a long legacy of tradition and cultural heritage in part owing to its geographical location and the diversity of its terrain. Oman occupies a prime location in the region located in the far southeast of the Arabian Peninsula and extends between the latitudes 16.40 and 26.20 degrees north and longitudes 51.5 and 59.40 degrees east. To the north of the Sultanate of Oman is the Strait of Hormuz, to the south is the Republic of Yemen, to the east is the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman and to the west are the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Oman is the second largest country in the Arabian Peninsula. It is a beautiful country with a varied terrain comprising plains, mountains and sea. These three types of climatic environment, namely, marine, mountain and desert, in turn affect the local communities as well as the varying conditions of their lives and means of livelihood.

Oman occupies a privileged position among Arab countries as it combines its cultural heritage with a track record of achievements. Omanis not only contributed to the glory of the country, but also played a prominent role in the making of history in the Islamic period. The cultural influence of neighbouring countries and trade had a role in building Omani history and in turn made an impact on its local culture. For example, the Omanis imported sandalwood and bitter orange wood, which were required to make the khanjar handle. Characteristic inscriptions on the Omani khanjar include a design like an eye or a tear that appears on the scabbard cover and belt of the khanjar. This design is known by several names, including (*Ein Al Ghazal*) deer eye, which is actually from India and appears in Indian textiles and cloths.

As a political entity, Oman has its own culture, customs and traditions, as well as its history and characteristics, which altogether help to make Omani culture distinctive and give it an authentic Arab identity with a unique character (Owtram, 2004; Jones, Jones & Ridout, 2012).

The cultural habits inherited by the Omani society are the habits and traditions drawn from the principles of Islamic religion and civilization which are influenced by Omani heritage and history. Omani society still clings to these customs and traditions and is keen to show them so in such a way that the society has become a byword for good moral character and cherished values and habits (Ghubash, 2014).

The culture of a society is reflected automatically, whether positively or negatively, in the pattern of life in the community and in the behaviour, habits and traditions of the people in it (Milner & Browitt, 2002).

The level of intellectual and cultural life style is a highly positive factor in increasing awareness among the people of that community and rises in accordance with the cultural and educational levels possessed, and vice versa. The modern Omani renaissance has succeeded in combining the legacies left by the ancestors and their ancient civilization with the present day, whereby progress and development consists of mixing the glorious past and the present to create a bright future.

Subject of the study

The current research examines one of the ancient legacies belonging to the country that has passed from the past to the present characterized by modernity. As a proud Omani, this researcher has chosen to study the Omani khanjar – one of the symbols of Oman civilization – because of its historical significance to cultural life, while the specialty of the researcher – graphic design – had an impact in the selection of the research topic and the method chosen to publically present the research information through a website. The khanjar, whilst a common object and a significant symbol of Oman, has been neglected as a contemporary object for the research. The khanjar exists on the cusp between tradition and modernity and unless the traditional practices of its manufacture are recorded they will soon be lost as social changes impact upon the historical and cultural practices.

“Oman mother loves all her children and Omanis are all sons of this kind mother wanted them all justified faithful” speech of His Majesty *Sultan Qaboos bin Said*, Sultan of Oman 1974 (Al Falhi, A. 2008, P 44). This speech serves as index of how Omanis cultivate a sense of belonging to their homeland. Affiliation to the homeland for Omanis is not only about belonging to the land or simply as an expression of identity; rather it is a philosophy and a lifestyle.

The subject of the research is to study the Omani khanjar, to provide an accurate, historical and contemporary context that surrounds its manufacture. It records the processes of its manufacture, and describes its typology. An important outcome of my research is the production of a website that makes this information readily accessible to an interested audience.

During the recent period of modernization in Oman (Outram, F. 2004, P 77), recent generations of Omanis have neglected Omani's rich history and culture. Education in the arts and the academic study of the art is a recent development in Oman started in the 1970s (Amri, M. n.d). This cultural and social situation echoes that of many economically developing societies around the world who have seen how customs and cultures are forgotten during the process of modernisation and globalisation (Featherstone, 2007, P 13-15). The last major international exhibition of Omani crafts was held in 2010 and was a very general review of craft manufacturing (A treasure-trove of Omani crafts, 2010).
http://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2010/06/article_0007.html.

Similarly the Sultanate of Oman Public Authority for Craft Industries, an organization that regulates and protects the craft industries. This research has similar aims in protecting and developing research into the crafts. It differs from the organisation's aims in that this research project has gone into the field to research undocumented activities (Sultanate of Oman, Public authority of craft industry, 2014). http://www.paci.gov.om/English/About_en.aspx

Omani cultural traditions need to be recorded and examined now, as there is not a developing body of historical documentation. This study is a part of that process of recording tradition in the form of academic history.

Omani artisans and silversmiths (Hawley, R. 2000 P 69-71) are renowned for their khanjar creations (see Figure 01). They are renowned works of art (Richardson & Dorr, 2005, P 229).



Figure 1 Silver detailing on khanjar © Khanlid Al Busaidi

With the passage of time this heritage will be gone forever if it is not preserved at present.

The khanjar is a significant part of the Omani culture. It is very important in more than one way for the Omanis. It is the symbol of the country, and appears on the flag of the country. It is the emblem of the Government of Oman and the Omani culture. Secondly, the khanjar and the cultural practices surrounding it are the parts of everyday life (Rebecca L. Torstrick, E.F. 2009, P 84; Condra, J. 2013, P 770).

Khanjars are an important artefact of the Omani culture and naturally, while experiencing rapid change in society, there is a need to preserve such artifacts (Malik, A. n.d). <http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/Contact-us/>

Both politically and economically history is replete with examples where Arab people have struggled hard to preserve their respective cultural heritage (Jamie Kaminski, A. M. B., David Arnold. 2013, P77; Karen Exell, T. R. 2014, P 109; Barakat, H. 1993, P 12).

There is no doubt, how important a culture is to a nation. Culture is dynamic and it brings about changes. But there are some strong traits of culture, both material and immaterial, transmitted to the next generation and never change. This study aims to encourage the idea that the khanjar is one of those traits or artefacts that Omani society should cherish the most.

Omani khanjars are one of the symbols of Omani heritage and one of the many legacies of pride cherished by the Omanis and which form a part of the

Omani civilization. Due to its historical and cultural importance, it is essential to record and document everything about the Omani khanjar.

There is a long tradition of acquiring the khanjar and passing it on from one generation to another. Omanis wear the khanjar at social, religious and national events. However, in the past men wore the khanjar around the waist throughout the day and only took it off at bedtime. It was a symbol of masculinity and prestige. Boys started wearing a khanjar to signify the arrival of manhood, which obliged them to appear to be men with the right to sit with the adults in their councils. In recent decades there has been a decline in wearing and using the khanjar in everyday life. Some young people now regard wearing the khanjar as a kind of prestige on special occasions only. The intention of the present research is to encourage future generations to preserve and cherish the Omani khanjar and make them aware of all that is relevant to the khanjar. The research aims to preserve and protect this ancient craft heritage from distortion and extinction.

The researcher was keen to interview experienced artisans (with not less than 30 years experience). The benefit of their experience enriched the research, which focussed on documenting their practical experience as a kind of encouragement to honour them. It also focussed upon the way to protect this heritage from being lost in the forthcoming decades. The researcher also documented their names to honour the families that have inherited the craft through the generations.

The research confirmed that Omani khanjars are also sold in other Arab markets such as the "*Khan El-Khalil*" market in Syria. Many foreign tourists are keen to acquire the khanjar, indicating that its fame has become global. Some types of Omani khanjars are even found in East African museums.

This research is the basis for the preparation of a book about the Omani khanjar to be written in Arabic and English. The book will serve as a reference to researchers, stakeholders and other interested parties engaged in the study of the Omani khanjar. There are few published books focussed specifically on the Omani khanjar. Instead the research conducted for this

doctoral thesis has determined that at present there are either general studies looking at the silver industries or legacies, or studies of the traditional khanjar, which often only comprise a part of their studies. In addition there are some brochures or reports on selected topics like the new tariff and press articles that only deal with the dagger in brief terms.

The main significance of this research is to provide sound historical information about the types, manufacture, design and cultural significance of the khanjar in order to inform the future generations about the importance of the khanjar in Omani society. As a result of modernization, recent generations have neglected Oman's rich history and culture. Education in the field of arts and the academic study of the arts is relatively a recent development in Oman started in the 1970s.

Omani cultural traditions need to be recorded and examined now, as there is no official body of historical documentation. This research is a part of that process of recording tradition in the form of academic history. With the passage of time this heritage will be gone forever if it is not preserved now.

Both politically and economically history is replete with examples where Arab people have struggled hard to preserve their respective cultural heritage (Barakat, 1993). There is no doubt about how important a culture is to a nation. Culture is dynamic and it experiences change but there are some strong traits of a culture, both material and non-material, that is transmitted to the next generation and never changes (Rowlands, 1993).

There is an absence of published material that depicts the manufacture of Omani khanjar in any form.

Research objectives

1. Review the information associated with the Omani khanjar in a systematic manner.
2. Conduct and analyse interviews relating to the manufacturing, uses and types of khanjar.
3. Record the characteristics of the khanjar and its manufacture.

4. Disseminate the research findings through a website devoted to the khanjar.

Research questions

1. What is the cultural context of the Omani khanjar?
 - What are the uses of the khanjar in the past and the present?
 - What are the ways and forms of wearing the khanjar?
 - What are ways to store the khanjar?
 - What are the steps for maintenance of the khanjar?
2. What are the types of khanjars known in Oman?
 - What are the primary and secondary parts of the khanjar?
 - Have the types of khanjars changed with the passage of time?
 - Are there any new types of khanjars?
3. What are the steps for making the Omani khanjar?
 - What are the basic materials used in the manufacture of the khanjar?
 - What are the tools used in the manufacture of the khanjar?
 - What are the manufacturing processes of the khanjar?

Study sample

1. Omani khanjar makers were selected from three provinces in the Sultanate consisting of four persons from the province of *Ad Dakhliyah* including one each from the state of *Bahla*, *Sumail*, *Bidbid* and *Nizwa*, two from the province of *As Sharqiyah* including one each from the states of *Bidiyah* and *Sur*, and one from the province of *Al Batinah* from the state of *Saham*.
2. Owners and vendors of Omani khanjars in the local markets.
3. Workers in the public and private museums were selected based on their experience in working with museums and those interested in the study of Omani khanjar.
4. Workers in government institutions such as the Ministry of Heritage and Culture and Public Authority for Craft Industries.

5. Khanjars available in government and private museums as well as those made available by some people (makers or owners) or various castles and forts in Oman.

Importance of the research

The main significance of this research is to provide sound historical information about the types, manufacture, and design of the khanjar that has been hitherto been unavailable.

The research aims to offer an in-depth study of traditional legacies of the manufacture of an object which represents the cultural traditions of Oman and which needs to be recorded and documented.

1. Highlight the importance of the registration for ancient craft heritage protection and preservation against distortion and extinction, such as the possible demise of the khanjar industry in the next decade or two.
2. Promote and honour the experienced craftsmen and their work through this kind of research and document their track record in the history of the Omani khanjar industry.
3. Encourage future generations to preserve and cherish this symbol of identity and make them aware of the Omani khanjar and its relevant khanjar industry.
4. Enrich the current research library by providing a cultural reference to researchers interested in studying the Omani khanjar through the establishment of a website.
5. Contribute to regional and global knowledge about the Omani khanjar in particular and the Sultanate in general.

Literature Review

The researcher relied on several key reference sources in Arabic and English. The review is divided into three sections

1. History of Oman and the history of the khanjar.
2. History and theory of cultural heritage and its importance.

3. Traditional crafts and why it is important to maintain them.
4. Small books and leaflets.

1. History of Oman and the history of the khanjar

The history of Oman extends almost over 13 centuries and so the historical literature review concentrates the rule of *Al Nebahenah* (1154 till 1624), the rule of *Al Ya'ariba* (1624 till 1741), and the rule of *Al Busaid* (1744) dynasties, these periods precede of the rule of *Sultan Qaboos bin Said*, which extends into the reign of *Al Busaid* (Albusaidi, S. 2012).

The two volume reference book *Al Raea fi Al Tarikh Al Omani* (Wonders in the history of Oman) explains the different periods of rule during the history of Oman examining the social and cultural circumstances that effected prosperity and progress, that contributed to the rise and collapse of governance and facilitated moves to the new reigns. The book was important in helping the researcher clarify the characteristics of each period in order to identify the ancient and traditional practices of the Sultanate of Oman (Albusaidi, S. 2012).

This book is the most comprehensive reference for the history of ancient and contemporary Oman. It uses both historical narrative and data in the form of pictures, maps, tables, summaries, in order to discuss cultural issues. It is an important point of reference, and summarises the body of literature dealing with Omani history.

Mlamih min Al Tarikh Al Omani (Features of Omani history) gives a brief history of the 4,000-year-old Sultanate of Oman. What distinguishes this book is the cultural sensitivity of the writer. The definition of the Sultanate of Oman is developed through a geographical and historical analysis of the nature of the terrain and its impact on the lifestyle of the Omanis. The strategic location of the Sultanate of Oman is examined in the book, examining how trade and politics built the Omani culture (Alkharosi, S. 2000).

Lamha Tarefia Lilathar wa Al Modin Al Omania (An introduction to the cities of Oman) is an introductory text about the social history of the Sultanate of

Oman supported by dozens of ancient and modern images. It provides important information about modern and historical figures talking about the population, flora and fauna, villages, cities and states in the modern renaissance of Oman (Almaskiri, A. 2008).

Al Gografia Al Seiahia fi Sultanate Oman (Tourist geography of the Sultanate of Oman) examines tourist activity and the geographical distribution of tourist venues in different provinces, the impact of tourism on the environment, and the social, economic and cultural aspects of tourism in the Sultanate. The geographical diversity of the Sultanate contributed much to the revitalization of Oman tourism; the book sheds light on aspects of tourism in all governorates of the Sultanate (Algariri, A. 2004).

The book *Silver, the Traditional art of Oman* was written from the viewpoint of a western visitor to Oman. The author clarifies the role played by silver in the Sultanate examining the role of silver in personal adornment, marriage, rituals, weapons, and in trade (Hawley, R. 2000).

2. History and theory of cultural heritage and its importance

The Sultanate of Oman has a rich cultural heritage which Omanis are proud of. The government attaches great importance to heritage and is keen to find various ways to preserve the rich legacy passed down from their ancestors. The researcher has highlighted the importance of Omani heritage in the current study and included a number of references.

Traditional arts do not stem from nothing but is the result of complex interaction between individuals and groups and their surrounding environments over time. Consequently, we do not know who the original creator is.

The following sections discuss key texts referenced in the current research that address the theory of cultural heritage and its importance.

This book *Min Fnoon Oman Al Taqlidia* (From Oman traditional arts) is published by the Oman Centre for Traditional Music. It aims to define various traditional arts and includes a number of analytical studies of selected art

forms. The value of the book lies in documenting these works and preserving them from potential extinction and loss. This documentation links all the works to traditional arts in some way, be it in terms of their definition or spread to places of residence and other types of social contexts. The works are also categorised according to the occasion or place of performance: social arts, religious arts, working arts, fishermen arts, Bedouin arts and farmer arts (Alealam, W. 1995).

Cultural heritage refers to the physical and non-physical outcomes of cumulative human thought and practices in daily life. The translation of human ideas and dreams into reality results in various cultural vocabularies, whether tangible or intangible.

The book focusses on the preparations behind a number of traditional arts and social events as well as the national list of heritage, and offers a practical definition of each element (Alealam, W 1995).

Al Mosiqa Al Omania wa Al Torath Al Arabi (Omani traditional music and Arab heritage) is a book that is part of the Arab Heritage Library, which archives the musical heritage of Oman. The author *Muslim bin Ahmed Al Kathiri* provides an integrated approach to identifying the basic features of Omani music within artistic and cultural frameworks. This is the most comprehensive analysis and in-depth comparative research on issues relevant to Omani musical heritage (Al Kathiri, 2002).

This book is a groundbreaking study. Perhaps the most important aspect that distinguishes this research is the author's knowledge of the reality of Omani music and how he has chosen to address it. For the first time, the study of musical heritage of Oman is contextualised with reference to the broader Arabian Gulf in terms of general history, jurisprudential data and literary sources. The comparative analysis provides an objective and informative discussion of the various issues raised.

In the introduction to the book, *Muslim Al Kathiri* explains that his research relied on three primary sources: archaeological, written and oral. He confirms the important place of music in Omani society and asserts that musical practice is very common in Omani cultural traditions. He provides a detailed

list outlining these different musical forms. Common topics or themes in traditional music include but are not limited to the camel, horse, sword, people, memories, judgment, asceticism, joy and sadness. Suffice to say, religious themes are at the forefront, whereby the traditional opening and concluding lines of any lyrics are often explicitly religious (Al Kathiri, 2002).

The *Encyclopedia of National Dress: Traditional Clothing around the World* presents detailed background historical and geographical information and discusses traditional clothing with reference to the region where they are from. This work is of great importance to school and undergraduate students, readers interested in studying anthropology, textiles, fashion, science, ethnography and history, and in particular those who want to research ethnic dress.

The book aims to, firstly, introduce traditional national clothing from around the world and, secondly, offer a detailed examination of what is arguably a key traditional symbol all over the world. The book also shows how each costume is worn, and explains the style and method of its design, and illustrates the materials used for making each part of the costume (Condra, 2013).

Oman, Culture and Diplomacy examines Oman's political role in world diplomacy and international relations. The idea of diplomacy not only refers to the interaction of the Sultanate of Oman in the global community, but it also encompasses the principles and practices of social and political participation. This basis for diplomacy has in turn influenced the nature of Omani life.

This book examines the culture of the Sultanate of Oman and, specifically, its cultural policy through diplomacy. It is based on primary research into the religious and social traditions of Oman. It is also an ethnographic study of Omani language and customs. It links Oman's international relations history, culture and social organisation to colonial novels and other accounts of the Cold War and the peace process in the Middle East (Jones & Ridout, 2012).

Cultural heritage in the Arabian Peninsula provides a broad overview of heritage projects. Heritage projects in the Arabian Peninsula are

experiencing rapid growth with the proliferation of museums and heritage sites as signifiers of the transformation of national identities, and as a means to put the Arabian Peninsula countries on a global map. This book deals with the use of Arab heritage models in the Arabian Peninsula following two main lines of research enquiry: firstly, the concepts and practices of heritage identity and, secondly, the expression of cultural and national identity that is being constructed through museums and heritage sites at the state level.

The first part of the book highlights the effect of the Western point of view and fear of Islam on the heritage of the Arabian Peninsula. It also examines the current context of the Arabian Peninsula and its impact on traditional practices. The second part highlights the museums and heritage sites in Arab countries, including Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Yemen, and focusses on museums that prioritise definitions of national identity and Islamic identities. It also considers the issues of how to display different types of cultural heritage and how to manage archaeological sites (Exell & Rico, 2014).

Contemporary Issues in Cultural Heritage Tourism is an important book that provides an overview of theories that locate tourism within the framework of cultural heritage. It addresses key issues such as the role of investors in the marketing of heritage, the impact of economic and social development, and the effect of information technology and communications. The book refers to international examples of cultural heritage sites and monuments as well as museums of modern art (Kaminski, Benson & Arnold, 2013).

3. Traditional crafts and why it is important to maintain them

This issue was one of the main topics addressed by the researcher in his study of the Omani khanjar.

“The craft Heritage of Oman” is an encyclopaedia that studies the culture of traditional Omani crafts; it covers a broad range of topics and importantly addresses the value of the craft traditions of the Sultanate of Oman, and the

need to protect the handicrafts and traditional crafts from extinction. (Neil Richardson, M. D. 2005).

The Public Authority for Craft Industries publication *Al Hiraf Al Omania – Derasa Tawthiqia* (Omani crafts - documentary study) is designed to facilitate the scientific study of the Omani crafts. The first section (cultural environment and regulatory aspects of the Omani Craft Industries) documents the Omani craft industries and addresses the objectives of documenting heritage and traditional crafts. It examines some international models and mechanisms to preserve and to promote the craft industry, and their applicability in the Omani environment. It looks at primary resources available within the craft industry and the geographic distribution of activity in the Sultanate.

The second section (documenting craft industries) records everything that has to do with the various craft industries in terms of; definition of the craft, the historical dimension of the craft, raw materials and tools made within the industry, production stages and their utilitarian and aesthetic value. The craft industries listed are; the pottery industries, metallurgy, woodwork, leather industries, the textile industry, silver industries, *Sarooj* "Oman Cement" industry, fishing industry tools, the distillation of aromatic plants, musical instruments, the perfume industry, and bone carving. (Alherfiah, A. A. L. 2011).

The book *Min Mofradat Al Torath Al Gair Madi – Khanjar* (The intangible cultural heritage of Oman – khanjar) includes a number of topics related to the definition of the Omani khanjar and how important it is to the Omanis. It highlights the government's efforts to maintain the khanjar. The book explains the varying khanjar parts and its accessories, also talks about the four kinds of Khanjars, their difference and their diversity. It clarifies the khanjar industry raising some issues the industry should address (Althaqafa, W. A. W. 2012).

Craft heritage is one of the legacies of ancient Oman, which established the presence of Oman and distinguished it in the Arabian Peninsula. *Al Sina'at Al Herfia Al Omania* (the craft industry of Oman) is a book issued by the General Authority for Craft Industries. It is an introduction to craft industries giving a brief overview of the sultanate's craft industries, including,

silverware, textiles, ceramics, wood, leather, metals, minerals and the implements of the fishing industry) (Alherfiah, A. A. L. 2011).

4. There are a number of small books and leaflets that mention Khanjars.

From the vocabulary of intangible cultural heritage is a booklet that highlights the government's efforts to preserve the Omani khanjar, and touches on many topics briefly including: parts of the khanjar, khanjar types, materials used in the manufacture of the khanjar, stages of the manufacturing industry, and types and methods of engraving on the khanjar (Alealam, W. 2011).

Prospects magazine released a special issue on the occasion of Omani Artisan seventh edition, and highlighting various efforts by the Public Authority for Craft Industries in maintaining, developing and encouraging the various Omani crafts. *The disappearance of the treasures of Oman* is a book that examines some of the legacies of the traditional Omani khanjar including its daily uses (Alherfiah, A. A. L. 2011).

Silver industries in Oman, briefly addresses the Omani Khanjar within the silver industry. *A study of the traditional crafts of Oman* also features sections documenting and publicizing aspects of the traditional silver crafts industry, including the Omani khanjar. Magazine editions (Alherfiah, A. A. L. 2010) of *Omani craft* are aimed at distinguishing the silver industries and addressing the Omani khanjar as part of the silver industry.

Hymns magazine is issued periodically by the Public Authority for Craft Industries. It contributes to the definition of traditional crafts in Oman and the definition of the body's efforts in maintaining these traditional crafts. The Public Authority for Craft Industries also publishes bulletins that define the legacies of traditional Omani crafts, including the Omani khanjar. The Public Authority for Craft Industries' handbook *Omani craft* has a section that focusses on the tools and materials used in the manufacture of the khanjar (Alherfiah, A. A. L. 2009).

Book entitled "The disappearance of the treasures of Oman" examines some of the legacies of the traditional Omani khanjar including its daily uses (Forster, A. 1998).

Research Methodology

This research aims to study in depth the Omani khanjar by examining khanjar designs and methods of production. The study seeks to provide informed historical and contemporary information about the khanjar.

The researcher has conducted a rigorous examination of the subject, including checking all aspects and relationships associated with it as well as the identification and description of both the research topic and study sample, which is important in scientific research and makes it easier for a researcher to gather information and data related to the subject.

The study sample consisted of artisans (khanjar makers) as well as owners and sellers of Khanjars and workers in public and private museums or those working in different institutions with related experience and interest in Omani Khanjars (Olsen, W. 2012, P 21).

In addition the researcher studied Khanjars available in museums or in the possession of the owners, makers and sellers of Khanjars. The researcher used the interview as a method of gathering information, and interviews were conducted with the aforementioned sample of people associated with the Omani Khanjars. Interviews with khanjar makers were undertaken to gather information about the history, uses, manufacturing methods, tools, decorations and styles of khanjar. The purpose of the interviews was to discover the types, materials and tools used by the craftsmen. The data collected from interview was empirical information about manufacturing practices and did not require any anthropological interpretation and contextualizing. I selected seven experienced khanjar makers expert to interview from seven different cities in Oman. Some of the expert had at least 30 years of experience in khanjar making. In addition the researcher also interviewed relevant experts at the Department of Ministry of Heritage and Culture, the Department of Omani Hand Crafts and the Omani Museum.

The researcher intentionally chose sample participants from different provinces and environments in the Sultanate in order to study the different patterns and types of Khanjars. Some of the khanjar makers, for example, only have experience in making one type of khanjar belonging to his province that he learned from his father and grandfather whereas others are experienced in the manufacture of various types of Khanjars. The researcher used the interviews to gather information about the history and uses of the manufacturing methods and tools, the materials and methods of engraving the various types of Khanjars, the maintenance and storage of Khanjars, and uses of Khanjars in the past and present day.

When the researcher finished from collecting all the information from the interviews, playing the recording for each interview and gathered all the answers from the interviews and compare it, there for most of the answers was the same but there is some different way of making it or using the tools, some of the khanjar maker still using the traditional way but other not.

There were some difficulties faced by the researcher in the course of conducting the research. One of the difficulties faced by the researcher during the interviews was the hardship he experienced to travel for long hours to reach the targeted people in the study sample. These people do not live in a single province, but are distributed in different provinces spanning long distances.

As the interviews also required documentation via photographs, audio and video recordings, and data collection, sourcing a technical support team and coordinating all parties in advance, and determining the interview date and approval of the person who will be interviewed, the actual filming process required considerable effort and many hours of preparation.

The researcher would often make arrangements for interviews including all the filming, but the interviewee would suddenly be unavailable at the last minute when the researcher and the team got to the place of interview, effectively forcing them to turn back after travelling long distances.

The researcher targeted a number of expert khanjar makers with no less than 30 years' experience. Nevertheless people in these age groups have different personalities and temperaments compared to the new generation as some did not wish to prolong the interview due to other commitments in their work and family lives. The researcher had to take this under consideration. Consequently interviews were sometimes punctuated by two or more breaks, some lasted more than an hour, others even spanned two days.

Despite the difficulties encountered by the researcher when conducting the interviews, some positives nonetheless deserve to be mentioned. Any successfully conducted interview with an experienced khanjar maker greatly benefitted the researcher who was able to record all the aspects of his work and document all the steps and stages involved in the manufacture of different parts of the khanjar.

Artisans have expressed interest in the subject of study and collaborated with the researcher. Some craftsmen nominated others to benefit from their practical experience in the field of making Khanjars. Other people expressed professional cooperation in allowing the researcher access to the khanjar in museums or ancient castles or forts. A lot of the participants in the study sample are keen to obtain a copy of the book that will be based on the current study.

There were additional difficulties faced by the researcher in relation to the translation of Arabic sources into English. The language of the researcher at Curtin University in Western Australia is English; however the specific terminology and Omani dialect of Arabic connected to the various parts of the primary and secondary dagger as well as terms related to the manner of manufacture of materials and tools have often been difficult to translate due the lack of synonyms in English.

The researcher used a sampling method for Omani Khanjars in order to elicit comparison between the old and the new Khanjars, and comparison between the types of Khanjars from different provinces. The researcher also visited

museums and castles as a part of tracking and studying the history of the Omani khanjar.

Data collection and information

The researcher collected information from the following sources:

1. Interviews.
2. Records, pamphlets, magazines, periodicals, books, brochures issued by institutions interested in collecting and documenting craft industries or legacies or traditional libraries.
3. Internet sites.
4. Researcher notes.

Interview data was analysed with the intention of extracting information about processes, types, tools, and materials.

Research Ethics

The researcher also interviewed some of the Omani craft artisans who possess the orally transmitted skills and knowledge of khanjar making. The interviewees and their environs were filmed, photographed and sound recorded during the interviews.

These old khanjar craft persons hold great knowledge which is an intellectual property to do with their own styles and crafts of creating new khanjars and repairing old ones. This personal knowledge can currently be observed at a local level without restriction. The research, however, will result in their personal knowledge being more widely available and thus it can be treated as an intellectual property.

Khanjar making, however, is transmitted orally and is considered to be a dying art likely to be lost within a short span of time. Most khanjar makers are now old men and it appears to be the last generation with the special skills because their sons (the traditional recipients of the skill) prefer to work in other more lucrative fields of work. Collecting this knowledge and publishing it offers the existing khanjar makers the potential for their craft to continue. It

is treated as an incentive to pursue their work effectively as a result of this research.

The researcher explained verbally in Arabic (the researcher is an Omani) to each khanjar makers being interviewed, how to use the information collected from the interviews which will contribute to the forth coming researches in the field of khanjar making and the benefits of recording its history, methods, tools, decorations, styles and uses. Each interviewee was also provided with an information sheet in Arabic describing the research.

Interviewees were informed that the information collected during the interview will be recorded with their names and they can be acknowledged in the research if they wish. This is especially significant because the numbers of khanjar makers are small and they can be personally identified very easily from the provided information during the interviews.

Participants were required to sign an informal consent form or verbally agree on film or sound recording to participate in the research. In either case, it was expected that the agreement was witnessed, preferably by a family member of the participant. Participants were informed they could withdraw at any time without penalty.

The sensitive personal information and public convictions inadvertently revealed in the interviews may have some adverse consequences on the interviewees. This one is considered to be another ethical concern. The information and comments may differ from one person to the other about the issues that are politically sensitive. In either case, such issues may cause unnecessary problems for the interviewees, the ways unrelated to this research. The researcher proposes to address this ethical concern by reviewing all recorded materials and notes carefully and editing it to remove any inadvertently revealed information that is potentially harmful to the interviewees.

Dissertation Structure

The presentation of research is in two parts, a written dissertation and a website. The website can be accessed at www.khanjar.om. The details of its structure can be found in appendix three. The target audience for the website is those people who wish to gain a broad understanding of the context in which the khanjar can be understood. The aesthetic of the website draws from an Arabic aesthetic with the intention of locating the khanjar within its geographical and cultural origins.

The creation of a Website has been chosen for three reasons:

- The internet has become one of the key resources for searching and retrieving information easily and speedily. It also allows others to share and exchange knowledge, point of views, ideas and suggestions. One of the reasons why most people are unaware about the existence of Omani khanjars is that there is only little useful information on the internet about them, especially in the English language, the most common language worldwide. By creating and publishing a website about the Omani khanjar, useful information about this culturally significant artefact will be made easily available for everyone, including fellow researchers and khanjar enthusiasts.
- In view of the fact that the younger generation are the more frequent users of the internet, I have created and published useful information on the internet for their access.
- Creating and publishing this website is one way of documenting vital information, such as recordings, detailed notes, and research material. This information can then be passed on to readers to promote awareness.

Due to these reasons, and being one of Omani's younger generation's designers, I decided to initiate a process of maintaining Omani heritage and sharing this with others. I used the skills that I had been equipped with, through education, by collecting all possible information and documenting it in the creation of a website. My website will be the first, with most information

about the Omani khanjar, its history, and its representation to the people and its uses.

This website will be useful to the Omanis and to the rest of the world. In order to make this website more informative, the website should be well presented by being:

- Simple
- User friendly
- Creative
- Customizable
- Elegant
- Flexible
- Powerful

The website's main objective is for the easy use and access of information for fellow researchers and interested readers. The program used to create this website is HTML and PHP a content management system. It is a code that is easy to use and upload faster on the internet, for a creative designer.

The written document is in five chapters with a four of appendices. The nature of the research; the description of processes, identification of parts and materials and explanation of interrelated sequences means that there is some overlapping and repetition of information as it is viewed from differing perspectives. The appendices contain information that contextualises and enriches an understanding of the khanjar. It has been taken away from the chapters' central narratives in order to keep each chapter as focussed as possible.

Chapter one examines the ways in which the khanjar has been framed by the state and its institutions (which has framed the researchers own work) and also describes the traditional and contemporary uses of the khanjar. Chapter two describes the typology of the khanjar and its parts. Chapter four identifies and describes the ways in which the khanjar is made. The chapter concludes with a description of how the khanjar might be worn. Chapter three separates the khanjars out into their various types, describing their characteristics and

how they might be identified. The conclusion takes the form of recommendations for future practice and the development of this current project.

Chapter 1

Government Attention & uses of the khanjar

Government Attention to the Craft Industries

This chapter establishes the context in which my research has taken place. It reveals the growing interest in Omani history and historical artefacts and the way in which it can help shaping the development of Omani contemporary culture. In describing the administrative structures and practices that surround the production of craft and craft education in Oman, I wish to emphasise the practical and symbolic value of this research about the khanjar which is an important part of Omani heritage. I describe the way in which the khanjar has been used traditionally and is used currently. I have included a fuller photographic and descriptive study of how the khanjar fits into the current expression of traditional celebrations in appendix 2.

Omanis have continually taken pride in and cherished their role as the owners of an ancient civilization (Ahmed, H. O. 2009, P 5). National heritage has a significant value in Oman. Affiliation of an Omani is not only about belonging to the land; rather it is also about identity, as a philosophy or way of life. The main features of this traditional lifestyle are cooperation and participation, and close interrelationships among the various state institutions, especially those institutions that involve Omani citizens in decision-making. This is a contemporary aspect of Oman's rich tradition. The Sultanate's long-term strategy has been adopted to develop a modern state, but with a special emphasis on the development and preservation of Omani heritage and its popular culture (Mohammed, 2008, P 49).

The sincerity of this interest in culture and the arts comes through in a wide range of cultural activities particularly for art and heritage, and the establishment of various cultural institutions including both governmental and civil ones to work on promoting cultural heritage and supporting folk arts and crafts heritage that bear traces of their long history which convey a sense of authentic community. A separate ministry has been set up dedicated to heritage revival, focussing on the archaeological and cultural heritage and cultural diversity of the country. Craft is considered as one of the great legacies in the Sultanate. These industries have played a vital role in the life of the Omani people since long ago (Alqasmi, 1993, p 12). The people have relied

on these industries in the management of their daily lives and have formed a complex set of social and cultural relationships with their work practices as is the case in all traditional cultures in the region (Robertson, Al-Khatib & Al-Habib, 2002).

Initiatives to support the crafts were established in the prosperous era of His Majesty *Sultan Qaboos bin Said*, who gave care and attention to recognising their importance and providing leadership for the preservation of the craft industries that convey a sense of an authentic Omani identity. He has declared that Omani cultural heritage in all its forms should be given particular attention because of its significant role in the promotion of intellectual and artistic life as well as creativity and innovation in Oman. In a speech at the 2005 General Conference of the Organization of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - UNESCO on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the organization he remarked.

We attach our cultural heritage in all its forms and contents of material of particular importance and we mean a distinct attention because of its importance and significant role in the advancement of vibrant intellectual and artistic creativity and innovation (Alfalahi, 2008, P 141).

A special department in the Ministry of Heritage and Culture had been allocated since its inception called the "circle of traditional crafts" to take care of the craft industries. This department was then superseded in 2003 by the establishment of the Public Authority for Craft Industries. A subsequent number of Royal Decrees (No. 24/2003, 53/2003 and 33/2010) issued regulations for the management of Oman's craft industries and crafts people, facilitating the protection and development of craft industries in the Sultanate. This is an evidence of the importance the State gives to craft as a symbol of Omani cultural identity (Alherfiah, 2011, p 4).

Since its inception, the Public Authority for Craft Industries has worked hard to implement plans and programs for the advancement of craft industries through the establishment of several training and marketing programs in addition to providing care programs and the necessary studies for the

development of this sector. Work continues to develop the capabilities and services that will further progress the work of the authority.

The efforts of the Sultanate – as represented by the Public Authority for Craft Industries – have received tributes and appreciation in many international and regional forums due to the establishment of pilot projects carried out in the areas of craft and particularly with regard to the protection of intellectual property rights for the legacy of the craft, the development of craft heritage sites and environments, as well as the care and support of craft in general (Kennedy, 2005). Sultan Qaboos has also introduced craft competitions to draw the support of the nation's craftsman for stimulating the development of craft industries by using symbols that express Oman's historical heritage. The competitions also function to encourage craft projects and increase the efficiency of work performance (Alherfiah, 2011, P 11).

The Public Authority for Craft Industries implements many of the training programs and the rehabilitation of many artisans through training centres and crafts production. This has produced a crafts renaissance which affirmed the need and importance of such careers to the new generations of parents and grandparents. In compliance with the approach of the Sultan, the Authority has implemented ongoing programs, continuous training and rehabilitation for many Omani artisans in order to help them achieve good mastery of their crafts. The Authority also manages a number of associate artisans training programs and the establishment of a range of small and medium craft institutions (www.paci.gov.om).

The government is also interested in increasing the participation of young people and women in various training and artisanal production programs, in addition to providing technical support in the management of small and medium-sized enterprises and the marketing of handicrafts of the external and internal posts (Alherfiah, 2010, P 16).

The Authority also launched a range of new craft centres in a number of governorates of the Sultanate. Examples include a distillation centre for aromatic plants in the *Gabal Al Akhdar*, a training centre and production of

silverware training and production centre in the state of *Sinaw*, as well as training and production centre for khanjars and silver jewellery in *Muscat*, which aims to develop silver craft ware in the Sultanate. By providing training equipment and advanced machinery in the silver industry for development of new products carrying the Omani identity, the centre aims to sustain craft training for generations in the region, help create jobs and improve the economy, and increase the number of participants in the artisan sector throughout the Sultanate. The creation of small-scale projects in the manufacture of silverware contributes to local state production. The centre aims to create integration between the various crafts through the synthesis of craft with other forms and materials like bones and other crafts (Alherfiah, 2011, p. 11).

Basic training is provided to identify and choose the right raw materials, and make different types of Omani khanjars. There is also training on the manufacture of silver jewellery, and training on how to increase the level of technical output as well as project management, marketing and accounting skills. The centre produces products such as Omani khanjars, miniature models of the Khanjars, medals, gifts and non-silver items. The goal of the establishment of such centres is to provide opportunities for rehabilitation and training for all artisans in the Sultanate and provide a productive work environment that encourages creativity and artisan innovation (Alherfiah, 2011, p 16).

On the third of March of each year, the Public Authority for Craft Industries celebrates the Omani Craft Day in order to raise the spirit of efficiency and proficiency in Oman's artisan sector. This celebratory ceremony provides integrated programs of support for outstanding craftsmanship to artisans. An aspect of support provided by the Public Authority for Craft Industries is the allocation of an equivalent sum of money to a number of artisans from different governorates of the Sultanate and the promotion of production and marketing for artisans. This body offers financial support for creative production to enable craft industries to provide the finishing touches and local

Omani characteristics, as well as to encourage Omani youth to work in the craft sector and maintain the traditions of Oman (Alherfiah, 2010, p. 11).

The authority works to inventory all the nation's craft in order to preserve them and through the issuance of a registered craftsman's licence, which have been implemented in order to achieve a set of objectives for the benefit of Oman in general and Omani crafts in particular, create a database of craftsmen and crafts, and provide opportunities for training and qualifications and the organisation of domestic and foreign exhibitions. The craft card also works to provide an integrated database and digital documentation of artisans and the industries in which they practice. Licensing also works to ensure that craft projects are provided with all necessary facilities and access to the investors in the field, in addition to providing care for the craft projects (Alherfiah, 2010, P 4).

The mechanisms adopted to maintain and promote industries are:

- General supervision of the official and private sectors related to crafts.
- The formulation of laws related to the fields of craft industries.
- Planning and training in general.
- Tourism planning.
- Social planning.
- Planning for production and marketing.
- Educational planning for the study of the craft.
- Planning in the field of cultural production.
- Media planning to raise awareness of the importance of craft industries.

There is an interest in the establishment of craft fairs domestically and internationally to highlight the craft industries locally and to enhance international marketing programs. The promotion of craft Industries at the regional and international levels help to the showcase the competencies of Omani craft through the provision of live performances by craftsmen in various industries (Alherfiah, 2011, p 36).

The Commission has also produced a full range of publications to enrich interest in the artisanal sector and provide information related to the work. Special activities and events are highlighted through a number of design and media awareness programs aimed at spreading the culture of craftsmanship. The main objective the media awareness campaign is to encourage the current generation to value the importance of the craft and to contribute towards comprehensive community development as well as the development of community attitudes towards maintaining the craft industries. The journal called “Craft Outlook” has been published in order to achieve the same goals (Alherfiah, 2010, p 50).

The Public Authority for Craft Industries has also launched a website http://www.paci.gov.om/English/Index_en.aspx as part of its media outreach. The Authority is keen to develop the website and to ensure that it is continuously updated so that it can highlight all of its activities and diverse services. The Public Authority for Craft Industries also seeks to raise awareness among the generation of fledgling school students in different grades in all governorates of the Sultanate through awareness campaigns that promote the importance of preserving the craft and working to develop it; and highlights Omani craft to the younger generation and informs them about the role of the private sector, along with the training centres and artisanal production, in supporting Omani crafts (Alherfiah, 2010, p 15).

The national *Archaeological Heritage* seminar in 2009 focussed on the importance of preserving the heritage of Oman and called for the protection of cultural treasures from tampering and loss. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said stated in his speech on the occasion of the sixteenth National Day in 1986 that Omanis should take pride in their national identity. He advised that in the march towards making progress and prosperity, citizens should nonetheless still be mindful of traditional occupations that are a part of their past, especially agricultural occupations including fishing and livestock development, and other skills and crafts because of their utmost importance in the development of the country's economy. The Sultan declared that that society does not develop only on the basis of respect for the occupations of

parents and grandparents, nor is progress is measured by architectural accomplishments only. Instead, emphasis should be placed on the extent of the authenticity of this progress and the capacity of the community to absorb its work traditions. My research is a part of this drive to acknowledge tradition and to keep it vital (Alherfiah, 2011, p. 11).

The year 1994 was nominated as the year of heritage in Oman and celebrated alongside the Sultanate's National Day. The Sultan ordered the creation of a complex as a part of the Omani cultural project in the state of *Nizwa* to house national documents and manuscripts in the National Theatre and the National Library, which will be the largest library in the Sultanate equipped with traditional and modern books. Craft will certainly be one of interesting projects in this compound.

The efforts of the Sultanate of Oman to revive the Omani heritage are coordinated by governmental and private institutions, including:

- Public Authority for Craft Industries: The Commission has an important role and a fundamental interest in craft industries whose efforts have been mentioned in detail previously.
- The Ministry of Heritage and Culture: The Ministry is responsible for the establishment and supervision of museums. There are many museums in the Sultanate including the Museum of Oman, National Museum, *Sohar Fort Museum*, *Bait Al Loban Museum* and *Bait Al Zubair Museum*, which contain a large number of old Omani khanjars. These museums are interested in highlighting the glorious history of Oman, the traditions and lifestyle of its inhabitants over the centuries and collectibles and historical silver jewellery, Omani khanjars and copper works that feature the skill and unique ability to turn these raw materials into crafts and wonderful formations (Alqasmi, 1993, p. 42).

The Ministry is also interested in maintaining the castles and forts, which are considered to be the most prominent historical landmarks in the Sultanate, constructed thousands of years ago and featuring outstanding authentic architectural art of a unique nature with diverse

engineering patterns. The magnificence and beauty of the Islamic decorative arts have made the Sultanate renowned since many centuries ago (Alhathrami, 2009, p. 49). To complement the heritage characteristic of these castles and forts, the Ministry exhibits a range of crafts in the corners inside them showcasing examples of Omani heritage such as silver Omani khanjar and female ornaments and some textiles.

It is worth mentioning that some of the castles and forts have been converted into museums including *Nizwa Fort* in *Nizwa*, *Al Hazem Castle* and *Al Rustaq Fort* in *Al Rustaq*, as well as *Nakhal Fort* in *Nakhal*, and *Al minterb Fort* in *Bediah*. These museums are filled with many archaeological treasures.

The Ministry of Heritage and Culture is concerned with traditional arts in Oman, which vary depending on the province. These traditional arts are performed as a part of traditional Omani cultural events and in particular Islamic holidays such as *Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid Al-Adha* as well as the Prophet's Birthday, special occasions and seasonal harvest times.

Omani arts represent important events in the life of Omanis be it at national or personal or tribal levels.

The most important of the arts practiced in urban areas include: *Al Razha*, *Al Hbot*, *Al Azy*, *Al Sharh*, *Al Liwa* and *Al Medan*. These traditional arts go hand in hand with the revival of some traditional Omani symbols such as the Omani khanjar. These arts require wearing a khanjar either on its own or together with the shield and sword.

- Ministry of Tourism: The Ministry aims to revive tourism in Oman and Omani legacies including crafts, which is considered to be the most important tourism potentials in the Sultanate of Oman. The Ministry is keen to attract tourists to these legacies by marketing tourist spots such as castles, forts, museums and archaeological sites. In addition,

the Ministry is working to promote these legacies in international forums and posts (Alkhaifi, 2009, p. 61).

- General Authority for documents and manuscripts: The Authority cares for ancient documents and manuscripts that contain a lot of the history and legacies of Omani heritage. These ancient manuscripts are our first cultural memory. Thousands of manuscripts have been collected and stored in the Authority.
- The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education: Both of the ministries have revived Omani heritage including crafts in schools, universities and colleges by introducing courses or curriculum that highlight this heritage. These ministries also encourage students to pay attention to heritage issues through activities, events and competitions in various events.
- Ministry of Interior: The Ministry is interested in reviving Omani heritage and encouraging citizens to maintain it in terms of the official dress of men in government institutions and at local and international events and forums when representing the Sultanate. This official attire consists of formal wear comprising the Omani *dishdasha*, Omani turban and Omani khanjar. The official symbol of the ministries and government institutions consists of the Omani khanjar with two swords, which should appear as a symbol of governmental organisation in official correspondence.

It is worth to mentioning that each state of the Sultanate has a state symbol. For example, the state symbol of Sur is a ship because it is well-known for its local ships industry. The state symbol of *Bahla* is the *Bahla* fort, which is the proud historical and archaeological monument of the state. The khanjar is the symbol of the state of *Al Khaboura* that was in the past well-known for making the *Al Batini* khanjar (Badwi, 2008, p. 16).

The flag of the Sultanate of Oman consists of three stripes (white, red and green) with the red stripe on the left containing the slogan of the Sultanate (an Omani khanjar and two swords). White symbolises peace and prosperity, green symbolises fertility and agriculture in the country, and red symbolises the battles fought by the people of Oman through its long history to expel foreign invasions.

- **Royal Court Affairs:** The Court provides all types of material support and moral character to research that on historical, cultural and social issues. The Royal Stable and Royal Camels Unit oversee the races and annual celebrations to mark this side of Omani heritage. The Royal Court Affairs contributes to the Muscat Municipality to revive authentic Omani legacies. Omani history is celebrated each year in the Muscat Festival, which is promoted globally and regionally.

There are many governmental and private institutions working to support research and studies interested in reviving Omani heritage. Both the researchers and the artisans in these areas receive support (although the institutions that have been mentioned previously are just for males).

On a practical level Omanis are proud of these symbols of identity such as castles, forts and handicrafts. Omanis proudly possess old or modern craft, or a picture of a castle or fort. Omanis proudly give gifts to his or her colleagues inside or outside the Sultanate that have some of the symbols of Oman. Some allocated corners in their houses display symbols of Omani significance such as silver ornaments and the Omani khanjar.

The khanjar as part of craft heritage in Oman

The government is striving to maintain many craft industries along with their development and marketing. Craft industries are an important economic hub, contributing to the gross national product of the Sultanate's economy. The craft industries are diverse and information about them readily available on the Public Authority for Craft Industries website. There are wood industries, textile industries, rattan industries,

leather industries, copper industries, and industries for the distillation of aromatic plants and industries for the manufacture of silver jewellery.

Oman has been famous for its silver jewellery for a long time. It has become a way to reflect the width of human personality; there are silver jewelleryes for men, women and children. The most famous of these works is the silver Omani khanjar which represents the symbol of Omani identity. Khanjar is one of the traits of Oman – and the subject of this study. Wearing a khanjar is treated as a part of the customs and traditions of Oman, and it is one of the ancient legacies that Omanis cherish and are proud of.

The khanjar has a prestigious position in the Sultanate of Oman. The leader, government and people are equally interested in Omani khanjar. The General Directorate of Standardization and Metrology in collaboration with the Directorate General for the care of craft preparation and the Royal Decree No. 87/1 on 1/3 /1978 provide specifications for the components, parts, types and names of khanjars traded in the Sultanate. It also provides the specifications for the raw materials and manufacturing methods used as well as for the dimensions and weights of the final product, with the ultimate aim of protecting the national craft specification of Oman (Alsina'a, 2007, p. 4).

The Omani khanjar has been a personal interest of *Sultan Qaboos bin Said*, who ordered the end of importing Omani style khanjars from abroad as of 9 August 2005 in order to preserve the khanjar from imitations or counterfeiting because it has such resonant cultural meanings to the people of Oman.

In the field of intellectual property rights, a certificate (local number 822) was issued for the Omani khanjar. The Department of Intellectual Property of the Ministry of Trade and Industry also issued Ministerial Decree No. 47/2009 on the standard specifications of the khanjar of Oman, committing khanjar makers and all stakeholders in the Sultanate to

the adoption of such standards governing the maintenance and identity of the Omani khanjar.

Other approaches continued to be taken to keep the Omani khanjar tradition and focus its industry on the identity of Oman. Resolution No. 32/2010 of the Public Authority for Craft Industries was issued prohibiting the use of Omani dagger models and other forms of craft in any industrial products, whether locally manufactured or imported without the prior consent of the public Authority for Craft Industries.

The khanjar, past and present

Some understanding of how the khanjar is linked to Omani life is necessary to understand its cultural importance.

In the past

Tradition

Men wear the Omani khanjar for most of the day. It is considered part of the uniform of the day, even during prayers. It is only taken off when the man goes to sleep. Such is the merit and dignity of the man who is proud of their Omani heritage, and who is accompanied by the Omani khanjar outfit in all occasions. Hospitality in Oman has a distinctive character. Visitors to Oman households identify generosity and authenticity in Omani traditional attire and the community considers those who receive guests in their home without wearing it as a kind of negligence towards the guest.

The khanjar plays a practical role in hospitality. An aspect of Omani hospitality is to provide the meat next to rice (see Figure 02). This meal is prepared for the guest by slaughtering the cattle using the khanjar – made available by the host – and then cooking the meat using hot coals from the wood of trees.



Figure 2 Omani man pours coffee for his guest © Khalid Al Busaidi

Each nation has its own way of celebrating its festivals that reflect the legacy, traditions and history of the people. This is reflected in Omani holidays and social events such as celebrations and weddings that are expressed through traditional arts. Omani men and women wear traditional fashions as a

manifestation of joy and celebration. Men wear the Omani khanjar for both prestige and the expression of joy.

Held in the days leading up to *Eid Al Fitir* and *Eid Al Adha* (Religious Holidays) are markets that are popular and locally known as *Al Habtah* or *Al Hilqah*. *Al Hilqah* means people gathered in the vicinity of a large circle. *Al Habtah* means flocked people from all regions and villages. People flock to this *Al Habtah* to celebrate the joy of *Eid* with all the trimmings (see Figure 03 and 04). Omani men would wear their khanjar and hold their bamboo stick (*khaizaran*). Women would wear their authentic Omani clothes and ornaments of various kinds as well as henna. Children would also wear their traditional clothes.



Figure 3 Omani men sell goats for Eid © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 4 Omani boy sells goat for Eid © Khalid Al Busaidi

All kinds of goods are sold in this *Al Habtah* market starting with sacrificial animals as well as clothing, ornaments and Omani sweets and dates. The various colours and glittering ornaments as well as the khanjar create beautiful scenes. The voices of dealers calling out their bargains and goods together with the smells of popular Omani dishes evoke a sense of joy and happiness about the coming feast. Jockeys on horses and camels are considered as art and tradition in expressing joy in these festivities. Jockeys in the cavalry show their ingenuity and superiority in controlling the horses or camels in front of large audiences in crowded fields (see Figure 05). As part of

this wonderful scene, camels and horses are full of traditional adornments and attractive colours. People are keen to go to these fields wearing the Omani khanjar and carrying the khaizaran.



Figure 5 Omani man riding horse © Khalid Al Busaidi

Social events such as weddings and engagements locally known as *Malkah* are celebrated like all other festive occasions. The hosts of these occasions would honour their guests with Omani meals. As hosts, men, women and children would all wear Omani costumes. Omani men would have the khanjar and women would wear various jewellerys (see Figure 07). Keen parents would get their sons to wear a belt with a silver piece in front of their waist so that they can get used to wearing the Khanjar when they grow up (see Figure 06).



Figure 6 An Omani boy wearing belt © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 7 An Omani girl wearing gold for the celebration © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 8 An Omani man wearing khanjar and holding a sword © Khalid Al Busaidi

Travelling throughout Oman

The regions in the Sultanate of Oman are of varied topography. There are towering mountains and most famous is *Gibal Al Hajar*. There are caves, deserts, sand dunes and picturesque bays, which vary throughout the territory of Oman. Due to the diversity of the terrain Omani people travel using camels, horses and donkeys, or they might even walk if necessary in some cases. According to individual ability, people might move day and night in summer or winter, defying all circumstances and sometimes continuing for days or weeks or even months.

During these travels whether on foot or on the backs of the animals' people would carry their own luggage, money and simple weapons (see Figure 09). These Omani man-made weapons include different types of guns, knives and swords. The Omani khanjar is emphasised as the first of these weapons. The Omani khanjar protects its owner against any aggressor whether human (bandits) or animal (predators). The khanjar can be used in many ways by the traveller, including cutting tree branches or slaughtering food and sacrificial animals especially camels and bulls.



Figure 9 Omani men riding camel © Khalid Al Busaidi

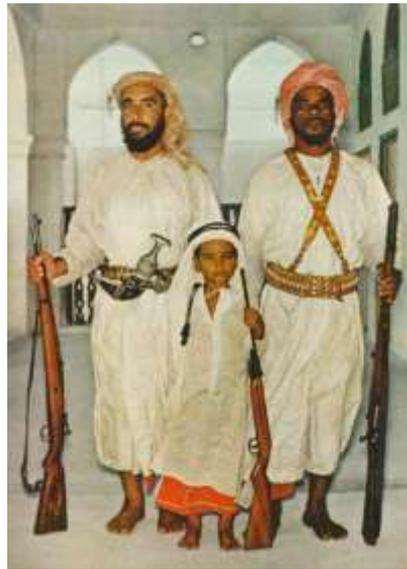


Figure 10 Omani men and a little boy armed with weapons © National Geographic Magazine 1956

Wars

During conflicts and wars in Oman whether internal or external, the Omanis have been keen to control the castles and forts and equip themselves in terms of weapons and various supplies. In cases where wars continued for a long time, they were also keen to secure safe places for the women and children. Each castle or fortress had small fortifications that included many small houses used by families and also included extensions called 'facilities benefit' or *Falaj*, foods and weapons stores. The khanjar served as an indispensable basic weapon (see Figure 11).



Figure 11 An Omani man armed with weapons © Khalid Al Busaidi

The khanjar was used in times of war when either one of the assigned lost their sword and spear. Furthermore, one of the amazing uses of the khanjar in wartime was to climb a fort or castle. This was done by using two blades in the crevices of the wall and moving between them until the person reached the top.

Finally, the khanjar was used in the slaughter of sacrificial animals, especially the slaughter of camels and bulls.

In the present

As traditions change the objects used traditionally also take on new and different qualities and functions. My research comes at a time when the traditional way of life that framed the khanjar's use is at a point of profound transition. The last generations of khanjar makers who used traditional ways of making khanjar are about to finish and their embodied knowledge will go with them unless action is taken. To learn about the value of the khanjar at present, we have to evoke the uses of the khanjar in the past and then identify aspects of its importance in the contemporary and the modern times. It is very essential to frame a relationship between the past and present that can inform the continued value of the khanjar.

Omani Hospitality

Omani culture is still characterised by the valuing of warm welcomes and generous hospitality (see Figure 11).



Figure 12 Omani men welcoming guests © Khalid Al Busaidi

The Omanis still maintain the welcoming and honouring of guests as a part of their Omani customs and traditions. However, the wearing of the khanjar is no longer essential for domestic interaction between family members and strangers. It is imperative however for everyone to wear traditional attire complete with the khanjar when receiving official delegations or being a part of their formal or official life.

Anyone visiting Omani homes will find decorative expressions of Omani identity. Allocated corners of the home usually contain special displays of traditional khanjars or swords or pottery. Some householders may prefer classic modern furniture, but are still keen to use food-serving items printed with symbols of their historical identity. Others display Omani female ornaments, while some Omani families may take pride in displaying khanjar inherited from their ancestors, whether on the wall or mounted inside luxurious boxes (see Figure 13).



Figure 13 Khanjar framed and hung on the wall © Khalid Al Busaidi

Celebrations of Religious holidays and Social events

The preparation of holidays and social events in Oman and the celebration of them still retain many of the customs and traditions of Omani people as well as intangible qualities of the ties of kinship among neighbours, friends and families.

The preparations for these celebrations in Oman still manifest in traditional markets or so-called *Al Habtah*, which remain popular in the various governorates of the Sultanate. A smaller number of attendees go to *Al Habtah* but men, women and children of all ages still turn up to prepare for the celebration. These days, fathers and grandfathers will diligently buy the sacrificial animal feast. The accessories worn to the feast differ; most will not be wearing the khanjar, but the Omani *dishdasha* instead. Men will cover their heads with a turban or Omani hat (*kumah*) for ease of movement in the *Al Habtah*. Groups of young people will still gather together, although not so eagerly with the elderly as before.



Figure 14 A Yang boy wearing khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 15 Yang girls wearing traditional dress © Khalid Al Busaidi

During *Eid* religious celebrations (*Eid Al Fitir* and *Eid Al Adha*) people will still wear their best clothes and some families are still keen for their Omani men to wear full Omani costumes with Omani khanjar. Parents of young children encourage them to wear the khanjar for a few hours or even a full day to revive old customs and traditions and instil in them the love of the authentic Omani identity and a respect for customs and traditions.

It is often possible to see a small child proud of himself when he wears the khanjar and stands next to his father and grandfather in the living room to greet people at various social events. Students of different ages also wear Omani costumes during the celebration of the National Day of the Sultanate. The nature and form of weddings in Oman differs with most families as they have been influenced by western culture. At some weddings the bride wears a western outfit (white dress) representing modesty, but Omani men are still keen on wearing the full traditional outfit (*dishdasha* - turban - *shal* - *besht* - khanjar - sword). On the other hand there are some families who are keen to have a traditional wedding celebration. They may devote one day to showcase the characteristics of a traditional Omani wedding (see Figure 16).



Figure 16 Traditional Omani wedding © Khalid Al Busaidi

The condolences similarly manifest inherited good qualities and habits, which ensure all Omanis to stick together. Omanis share sorrows and joys. Such habits bring them closer to each other and strengthen the bonds of love and communication between them. On these occasions, everyone would be wearing outfits complete with Omani khanjar and holding a khaizaran.

Traditional Arts

Most of the traditional arts are still practised in all parts of the Sultanate. Some of them are exclusively practised in certain provinces and inherited from grandparents and passed down to generations without change. The most famous traditional arts in Oman are the Fisheries arts and Al Razha dances. The *Dhofar* region is famous for *Al Rabobah* and *Al Bara'a* arts (see Figure 17). There are also some arts performed by the people of the desert called *Al Tariq*.



Figure 17 Traditional Omani arts men holding swords and wearing khanjars © Khalid Al Busaidi

These are just a few examples of the many traditional arts practised by the Omanis on their various occasions such as National Day and celebrating the tours of His Majesty *Sultan Qaboos* to the regions and states. All regions in Oman are keen to revive the arts on religious holidays and special social events. In order to give the impression of authentic traditional arts, inherited costumes would be worn for each Omani art form including the turban, *dishdasha* (traditional robe), khanjar, sword, shield and khaizaran (see Figure 18).



Figure 18 Traditional Omani arts men holding khaizaran and wearing khanjars © Khalid Al Busaidi

Travelling and tourism throughout Oman

Movements and travel have become easier within the country, despite the difficult and rugged roads and diversity of terrain in Oman. The government has sought to bridge the distances between regions and states with paved

roads through the mountains and by constructing bridges. Omanis no longer need to ride horses, camels or donkeys for transportation anymore, instead they can use public transport or taxis or aircraft.



Figure 19 A statue of a khanjar on a highway © Khalid Al Busaidi

The Ministry of Tourism is keen to promote leisure tourism throughout Oman, while maintaining the character of archaeological history and the customs and traditions handed down through time. The Ministry of Tourism is also in collaboration with the Public Authority for Craft Industries and other government institutions and private sector organisations to encourage tourism markets in all regions and states in the Sultanate.

At these markets, there are piles of spices and scents of frankincense and incense, exposure to traditional handicrafts in the form of textiles, pottery, jewellery and silverware, which tourists would want to acquire. Such markets allocate a large part to the sale and display of Omani khanjars as a marker of Omani identity, which is still something tourists are interested in and are keen on acquiring (see Figure 20 and 21). There are also a lot of local companies, which seek to provide at these markets a lot of goods that have a shape or print of the Omani khanjar or traditional ornaments for women or castles and forts, as well as shirts, pens, pots of various kinds and perfumes.



Figure 20 USB with khanjar case and key chain with khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 21 Traditional handicrafts and souvenirs © Khalid Al Busaidi

Due to the keenness of the Sultanate of Oman for the preservation of cultural traditions and social customs mixed with manifestations of the contemporary and the modern, it was important to give the khanjar some prestige and interest as a vital symbol of identity as traditions change. Its current use as a popular sign of Omani identity, in commodity culture, devalues its prestige that is compounded by the large number of its past uses having been atrophied. This is a common dilemma for traditional objects in a modern tourist economy (Taylor, 2001; Smith & Robinson, 2006).

Reasons for the disappearance of wearing the Omani khanjar in everyday life

In this research, I have studied the uses of the khanjar. The comparison between the past and present uses of it has revealed the possible reasons of its disappearance from the public life of Omanis i.e; the reluctance to wear the khanjar in everyday life may be outlined as follows:

1. At present, Omani men do not usually wear a khanjar. They would only do so on special occasions or for a formal ceremony. In the past, Omani tradition dictated that a man did not come out of the house without wearing the khanjar in order to create reverence for him and to carry a weapon for self-defence when he needed it.
2. The nature of some jobs today such as professional, medical and technical does not allow wearing the khanjar.
3. International laws do not permit wearing the khanjar. It is regarded as a weapon ready to be used at any moment. This is why Omanis do not wear it outside the Sultanate.
4. The cost of buying khanjar is very expensive because it is made of pure silver. Not many of them can afford nowadays and other priorities in modern life have emerged and need to be provided for. Nevertheless an alternative exists in the form of the emergence of private shops that lease the khanjar for special events and at a cheap rate.
5. Today's generation mostly has limited knowledge and do not know-how to maintain the khanjar properly. Cleaning the Khanjar requires sending it to some shops especially for maintenance, which has led to damage and a further increase in the cost. By comparison, in the past, owners of the khanjar had sufficient knowledge regarding its proper maintenance.
6. The ease of nomadic movement and travel between the governorates of the Sultanate and its mandates, along with the provision of safe and secure passage, has meant that there is no longer an inherent need to use the khanjar as a weapon against any human or animal aggressors.

Chapter 2

Types of khanjar

Types of Omani khanjars

This chapter itemises the varying types of khanjars particular to Oman. The Sultanate of Oman recognises many types of Omani khanjars and the specific characteristics of each type, including *Al Saidi*, *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini*, *Al Suri*, *Al Ganobi* and *Al Hanshia*. The penultimate section identifies a number of khanjars that have historical provenance but which do not conform to the typology of geography, the final section identifies modern forms and fakes.

1. The *Al Saidi* khanjar

This type of khanjar is named after Sultan Said bin Sultan, who became the Sultan in 1806 (Alhinai, A, S. 2010, P 14). The *Al Busaid* royal family is famous for wearing this kind of khanjar with the *saidia* turban and hat to distinguish themselves. The *Al Saidi* khanjar is worn in the centre and appears straight when worn.

The most distinguishing characteristic of the *Al Saidi* khanjar is its handle. It is covered with silver, and it comes in three types as follows:



Figure 22 The *Al Saidi* khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The first type of *Al Saidi* khanjar is characterised by the following (see Figure 22)

- i. Handle: It is covered with *al tikasir* rolled silver designs on the entire top and towards the bottom to the beginning of the ferrule with the left side edges without designs, allowing the original

handle material to show. Also cover the entire handle completely covered with *al tikasir* silver or gold decorations from the pommel to the ferrule (see Figure 23).



Figure 23 Handle of the first type of Al Saida khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Scabbard upper cover: The designs on the scabbard upper cover area comes in square overlapping motifs with Omani and Islamic designs surrounding a circular shape in the middle. The scabbard upper cover area is longer than the other types of *Al Saida* khanjars (see Figure 24).



Figure 24 Scabbard upper cover of Al Saida khanjar where the first type is of one normal size and the other longer © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Belt holder: This kind of khanjar comes with seven rings; three of them on the scabbard cover area and four in the belt holder area. They are connected with silver wires in the form of a strand of twisted wires known locally as *sim mahius*. Some Khanjar makers call this type *um sabea*, which means mother of seven relatives. The belt holder is straight when you wear it. Another feature of the

Al Saidi khanjar has two outer rings of which heads are conical in shape locally known as *ters* (shield) or *amama* (hat) (see Figure 25).



Figure 25 Belt holder of the first type of *Al Saidi* khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Scabbard cover: This area is covered by silver or gold thread. It is also mixed with some black colour which showcases the fashionable and aesthetic sense of the khanjar makers. More recently, different colours have been added at the request of the khanjar's owner who will ask for different colours to coordinate and harmonise with the colour of his turban. What distinguishes this kind of khanjar is that these strings exist only on the top half of the scabbard cover known locally as *al chandah* (see Figure 26). The lower half of the scabbard cover is called *al mekhalah*, which consists of designs design in *al tikasir* silver.



Figure 26 Scabbard cover of the first type of *Al Saidi* khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. Chape: The dividing line between *al mekhalah* area of scabbard cover and the chape is in a straight line. The design in this area in *al tikasir* silver, matches with the designs on the scabbard upper COVER (see Figure 27).



Figure 27 Chape of the first type of Al Saida khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- vi. Linking areas of *al mekhalah* and the Belt silver chain are small balls called *mirqat*, which are attached to the *al mekhalah* with the belt to make the khanjar slant when worn (see Figure 28).



Figure 28 Belt holder chain of the first type of Al Saida khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steps for drawing the designs:

Drawing the designs on Omani khanjars needs skill and precision, regardless of whether they are engraved designs in the *al tikasir* style or *al qala* style. For each types of kanjar, there are designs located on the handle, ferrule, scabbard upper cover, scabbard cover and chape. The khanjar makers coordinate the different types and forms of designs in different parts of each khanjar.

The following figures represent the steps for drawing the designs on the scabbard upper cover area (see Figure 29).

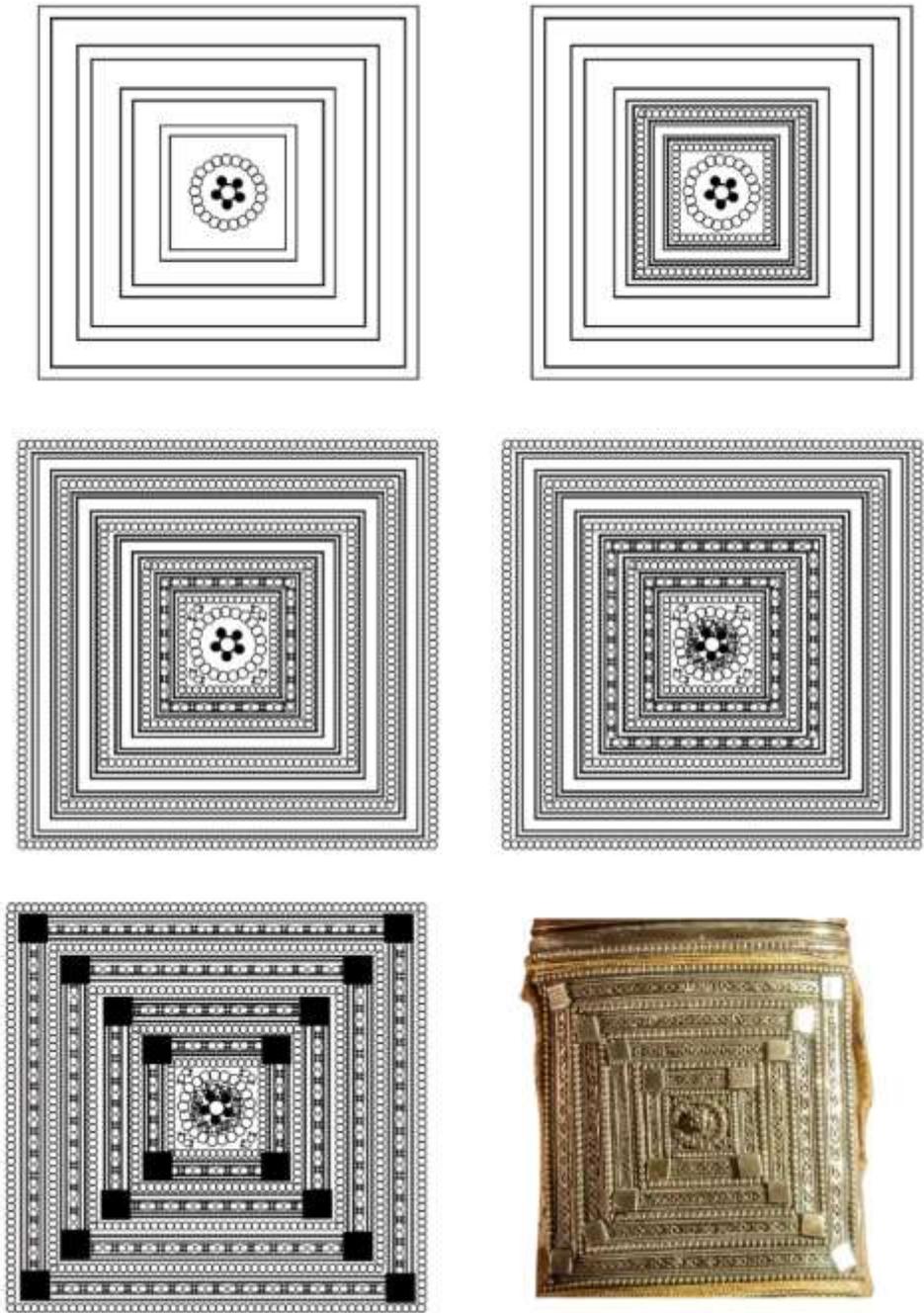


Figure 29 Steps for drawing scabbard upper cover of the first type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The second type of *Al Saidi* khanjar is characterised by the following



Figure 30 The second type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Handle: *al tikasir* silver design carvings cover the entire handle from the top to the bottom of the ferrule. The entire handle is completely covered with *al tikasir* silver or gold decorations from the pommel to the ferrule. What distinguishes this type of Khanjar is that the engraved head of the handle with a silver ball is relatively small. The other advantage of this handle is that its material (horn) does not appear because it is fully covered (see Figure 31).



Figure 31 Handle of the second type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Scabbard upper cover: The first and second types of *Al Saidi* khanjar share the same inscribed design on the scabbard upper cover area. The scabbard upper cover area is longer than the other types of *Al Saidi* khanjars (see Figure 32).



Figure 32 Scabbard upper cover of the second type of Al Saida khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Belt holder: Both types of *Al Saida* khanjar have seven rings, three of them on the scabbard cover area and four in the belt holder area (see Figure 33).



Figure 33 Belt holder of the second type of Al Saida khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Scabbard cover: This area is covered by a plain silver piece without any designs on the upper al chandah area, while the lower al mekhalah consists of designs in al tikasir silver (see Figure 34).



Figure 34 Scabbard cover of the second type of Al Saida khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Chape: The dividing line is between the al mekhalah area of scabbard cover and the chape. The designs in al tikasir silver have the same design as the scabbard upper cover (see Figure 35).



Figure 35 Chape of the second type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. Linking areas of *al mekhalah* and the belt silver chain are small balls called *mirqat*, which attach the *al mekhalah* to the belt to make the khanjar slant when worn (see Figure 36).



Figure 36 Belt holder chain of the second type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steps for drawing the designs:

The design of the second khanjar differs from the first. The following figures represent the steps for drawing the designs on the scabbard upper cover area (see Figure 37).



Figure 37 Steps for drawing scabbard upper cover of the second type of Al Saida khanjar ©
Khalid Al Busaidi

The third type of the *Al Saidi* khanjar is characterised by the following



Figure 38 The third type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: Similar to the first type in terms of the shape of the handle and the type of silver engravings. The third type is covered with *al tikasir* silver design carvings on the entire handle from the top to the bottom of the ferrule. The entire handle completely covers with *al tikasir* silver or gold decorations from the pommel to the ferrule. What distinguishes this type is that the engraved silver ball head of the handle is relatively small. The other characteristic of this handle is that its material (horn) does not appear because it is fully covered (see Figure 39).



Figure 39 Handle of the third type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Scabbard upper cover: This type has a unique scabbard upper cover area with designs in *al tikasar* silver in a set of parallel

straight lines. Its end also comes with *al qala* designs with carvings, with an additional wavy line (see Figure 40).



Figure 40 Scabbard upper cover of the third type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Belt holder: This type of *Al Saidi* khanjar has four rings, which are located on the front facing area as in other types of Omani khanjars. The belt holder is straight when worn (see Figure 41).



Figure 41 Belt holder of the third type of Al Saidi khanjar third design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Scabbard cover: The cover is covered by silver or gold threads which are also mixed with some black colour to showcases the fashionable and aesthetic sense of the kanjar makers. At times the khanjar owners will ask for different colours to harmonise with the colour of their turbans (see Figure 42).



Figure 42 Scabbard cover of the third type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. Chape: The dividing line between the al mekhalah area of the scabbard cover and the chape is straight. The designs in this area are in al tikasir silver just like that of the the scabbard upper cover (see Figure 43).



Figure 43 Chape of the third type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steps for drawing the designs on the third type of *Al Said* khanjar:

The following figures represent the steps for drawing the designs on the scabbard upper cover area (see Figure 44).

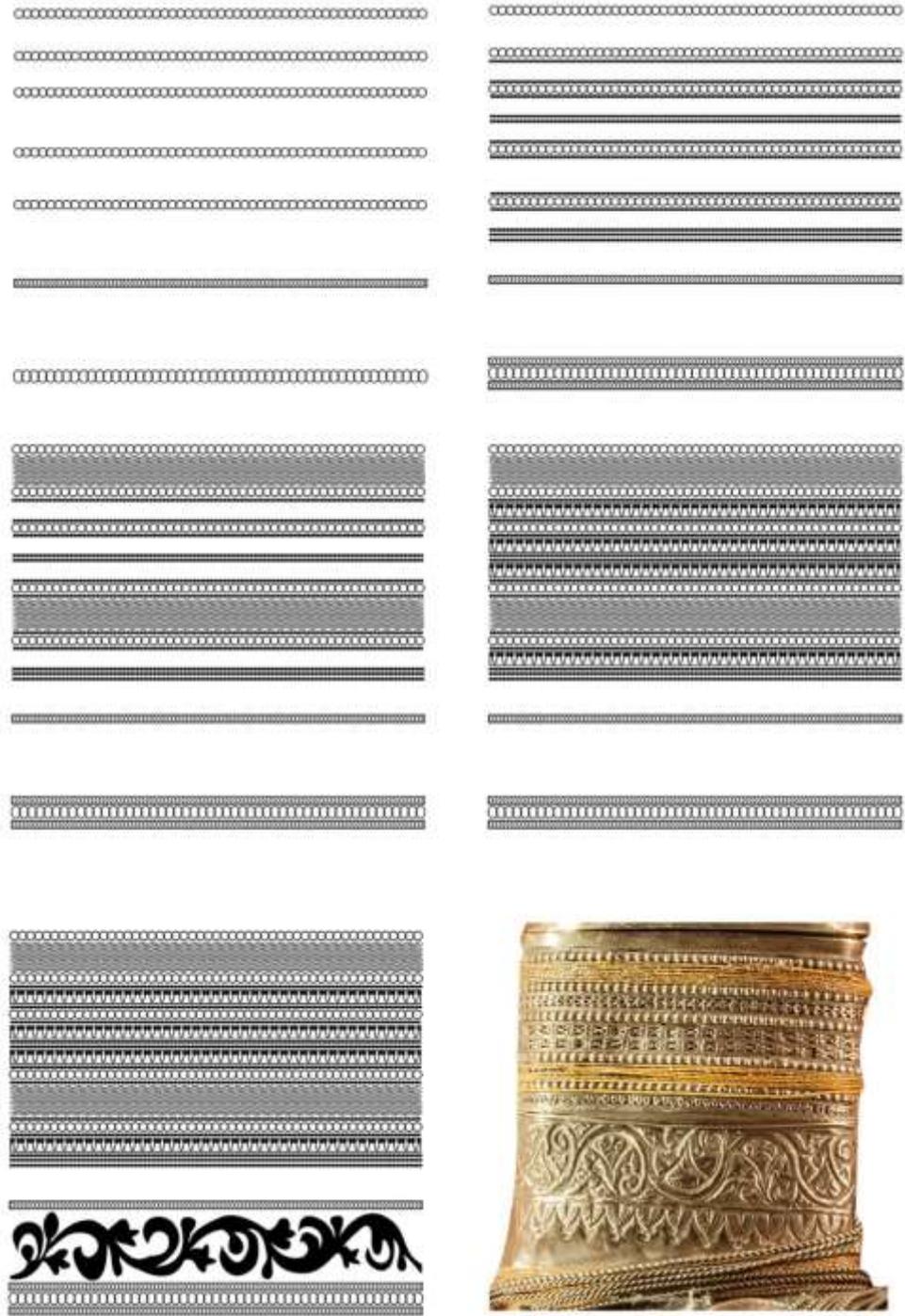


Figure 44 Steps for drawing scabbard upper cover of the third type of Al Saidi khanjar © Khaid Al Busaidi

2. The *Al Nizwani* Khanjar

The *Al Nizwani* Khanjar is named after *Nizwa*, which is located in the *Ad Dakhliyah* governorate of the Sultanate. *Nizwa* still is a famous artisan market for the manufacture of Omani Khanjars and it is a place where artisans are based.

This is the correct name for this type of Khanjar even though older Omani artisans may call it other names. The *Al Nizwani* Khanjar is worn in the middle and appears diagonally when worn (see Figure 45). It is also known as the largest type of Omani Khanjar and has the following features:



Figure 45 The *Al Nizwani* Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: This type of handle has a T-shape, and in the middle there is a small silver plate on the handle carved in the form of a column. It remains the largest part of the handle that is clearly visible and shows that it is made of horn. The back of the handle is not covered with any silver (see Figure 46).



Figure 46 Handle of the Al Nizwani Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The top of the handle is decorated with silver plates mostly in the form of geometric shapes called *shamarikh*. The Khanjar makers arrange these shapes aesthetically according to their tastes (see Figure 47).



Figure 47 Decorated handle top of the Al Nizwani Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Scabbard upper cover: The designs on the scabbard upper cover area come in the form of a small rose in the middle wrapped with small leafy branches on the right and left in a helical or spiral fashion. The designs in this area are in *al qala* style (see Figure 48).



Figure 48 Scabbard upper cover of the Al Nizwani Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Belt holder: This area of the belt holder slants, and for this reason the Khanjar appears slanted when worn. There are four rings in the belt holder. The two outer rings of the *Al Nizwani* Khanjar have conical heads (see Figure 49).



Figure 49 Belt holder of the Al Nizwani Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Scabbard cover: This area is covered with sewn silver wire. In this type of Khanjar the area of the middle line (*al mukasar*) is distinct. (*Al mukasar* refers to the boundary between the *al chandh* and *al mekhalah*) (see Figure 50).



Figure 50 Scabbard cover of the Al Nizwani Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. Chape: The dividing line between the *ml mekhalah* and the chape is straight; the design by *al qala* is the same design as those of scabbard's upper cover (see Figure 51).



Figure 51 Chape of the Al Nizwani Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- vi. Secondary Accessories: Since ancient times, the *Al Nizwani* Khanjar has been worn with accessories such as: an extra knife, tweezers, and eyeliner and holder.

The extra knife is attached behind the scabbard upper cover area and appears diagonally slanted to the left when worn. The knife handle is engraved with carvings similar to the designs found on the upper cover of the scabbard or they may complement the same patterns. The handle is covered with decorative silver wire. Alternately the handle cover is made of the same material like that of the Khanjar. The knife is kept in a sheath which is made of leather.

Some prefer to add tweezers to the Khanjar as a secondary accessory directed by the owner of the Khanjar for the daily use. The tweezers are made of silver and they are attached to the Khanjar belt by a chain on the right hand side when worn (see Figure 52). The eyeliner and holder are attached in the same place. The holder is made of silver gun bullet, which protects the Omani kohl inside. The eyeliner and holder are linked with a silver chain, which is in turn linked to the Khanjar belt.



Figure 52 The Al Nizwani Khanjar with eyeliner and extra knife © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steps for drawing the designs:

The following figures represent steps for drawing the designs on the scabbard upper cover area (see Figure 53).



Figure 53 Steps for drawing the scabbard upper cover of the Al Nizwani Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

3. The *Al Batini Khanjar*

This type of Khanjar is named after the *Al Batinah* governorate. Others call it *Al Saheliah* after some Khanjar makers from the coastal states in the north *Al Batinah*, which overlooks the Sea of Oman and is famous for this type of Khanjar (see Figure 54).

Al Batini Khanjar is smaller than the *Al Nizwani Khanjar* and worn on the left side, and is characterised by the following:



Figure 54 The Chape of *Al Batini Khanjar* © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: The handle comes in two forms with the following specifications:
 - First Design: This shares the same design as the *Al Nizwani Khanjar* handle (see Figure 46).
 - Second Design: This handle design used to be made from elephant tusks, but is today replaced by newly textured marble or plastic or wood according to the wishes of the Khanjar owner. It is decorated with very thin nails with accurate carvings of Islamic patterns (see Figure 55).



Figure 55 Second handle design of the Chape of Al Batini Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Scabbard upper cover: The designs in the scabbard upper cover area come in the form of twigs wrapped in a circular motion and arranged into three circles connected by small leaves. The design in this area is by *Al Qala* (see Figure 56).



Figure 56 Scabbard upper cover of the Chape of Al Batini Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Belt holder: This area of the belt holder is in a straight line and it has four rings as found in most types of Omani Khanjars, and the four rings are circular in shape (see Figure 57).



Figure 57 Belt holder of the Chape of Al Batini Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Scabbard cover: This area is covered with sewn silver wire. It also shares the same design with the *Al Nizwani* Khanjar (see Figure 58).



Figure 58 Scabbard cover of the Chape of the Al Batini Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Chape: The dividing line between the *al mekhalah* and the chape is semi-circular; the designs are the same as those of the design on the scabbard upper cover (see Figure 59).



Figure 59 Chape of Al Batini Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steps for drawing the designs on the *Al Batini Khanjar*:

The following figures represent steps for drawing the designs on the scabbard upper cover area (see Figure 60).



Figure 60 Steps for the scabbard upper cover design of the Al Batini Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

4. The *Al Suri* khanjar

This type is called *Al Suri* Khanjar in connexion with the Sur city located in the *Ash Sharqiah* governorate, in the east of the Sultanate. This type of Khanjar is considered to be the smallest in width and length (see Figure 61). This kind of Khanjar is also characterized by its light weight, and marked as follows:



Figure 61 The *Al Suri* Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: The handle comes in two forms with the following specifications:
 - First Design: This handle shares the same design as the *Al Nizwani* and *Al Batini* Khanjar handle with a T-shape, with a small silver plate in the middle of the handle carved in the form of a column (see Figure 46). The largest part of the handle is clearly visible and shows that it is made of horn. The back of the handle is not covered with any silver (see Figure 62).



Figure 62 Handle of the Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- Second Design: In this design, the middle of the handle has a small rectangular plate, which may be embossed or non-embossed. The plate is installed in a circular motion around the handle, and decorated with two star shapes, one at the top of the handle and the other at the bottom. These two star designs are called *shams*, which mean sun, and this kind of handle is locally known as the *Al Sifani* handle. This type of handle is named after the *Bani Saif* family or Omani tribes in *Ash Sharqiah* governorate. This family was well known for this type of handles according to the Omani Khanjar makers (see Figure 63).



Figure 63 Al Sifani handles for the Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Scabbard upper cover: The designs on the scabbard upper cover area come in the form of wavy branches wrapped by a group of small leaves. The design in this area is by *al qala*. The designs

come in silver mixed with gold depending on the owners of the Khanjars (see Figure 64).



Figure 64 Scabbard upper cover of the Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Belt holder: This area of the belt holder is in a straight line and has four rings as found in most types of Omani Khanjars, and the four rings are circular in shape (see Figure 65).



Figure 65 Belt holder of the Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Scabbard cover: The scabbard cover comes in two forms:
- First design: This area is covered with sewn silver wire, and shares the same design with the *Al Nizwani* and *Al Batini* Khanjar. Some of it is mixed with golden wire, depending on the tastes of the owner (see Figure 66).



Figure 66 First scabbard cover design of the Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- Second design: This area is covered with leather and sewn with silver wire and sometimes mixed with gold in various forms.

The design is characterised by simple thread sewing with beauty and simplicity while leaving spaces to show more of the leather (see Figure 67).

Another feature of the *Al Suri* Khanjar is that the scabbard cover area is diagonally angled to the top towards to the chape more than in other styles.



Figure 67 Second scabbard cover design of Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Chape: This chape shares the same design of the *Al Batini* chape. The dividing line between the al mekhalah and the chape is semi-circular; the designs in this area are by *al qala* and have the same design as the scabbard upper cover (see Figure 68).



Figure 68 Chape of the Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. The Secondary Accessories: The most common accessory for the *Al Suri* Khanjar is a wallet known locally as *al bakhch* (al bakhcha is a leather piece used as a small pouch or wallet, covered in front with silver and decorated with silver carvings in Omani designs that are the same as those on the scabbard upper cover. The designs complete the aesthetic side of the Khanjar and are sometimes mixed with gold. The al bakhcha is attached by sewing it on the right hand on the Khanjar belt when worn). The wallet is attached

to the shorter part of the belt. In ancient times, coins used to be kept inside it, but these days it is used for decoration only (see Figure 69).

Some prefer to add tweezers with the Khanjar as a secondary accessory as needed by the owner or for daily use. The tweezers are made of silver and are attached to the Khanjar belt by a chain on the right hand side when worn. The eyeliner and holder are attached in the same place.



Figure 69 The Al Suri Khanjar with extra knife © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steps for drawing the designs on the *Al Suri* Khanjar:

The following figures represent the steps for drawing the designs on the scabbard upper cover area (see Figure 70).

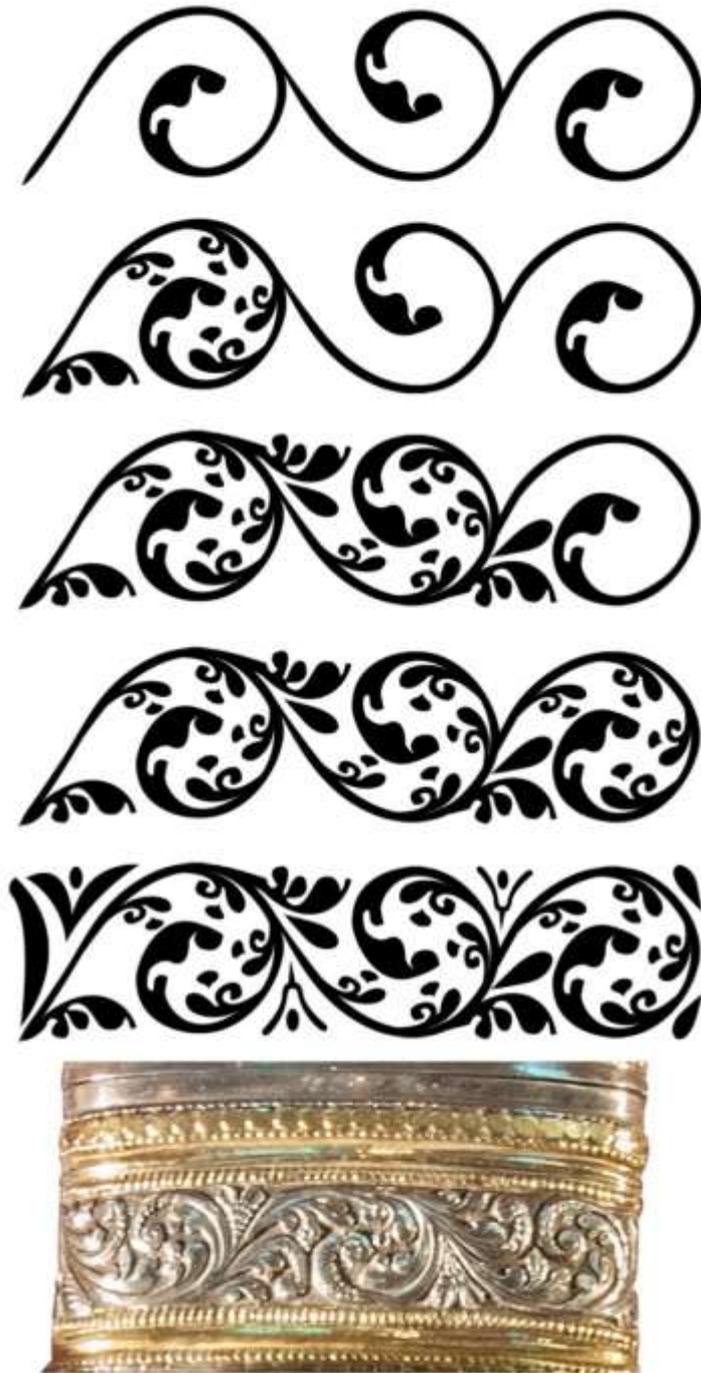


Figure 70 Steps for drawing scabbard upper cover of Al Suri Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

5. The *Al Ganobi Khanjar*

This type of Khanjar is named *Al Ganobi* khanjarin connection with the *Dhofar* governorate in the south of the Sultanate. This type of Khanjar is long and is closer in shape to a knife than an Omani Khanjar. It is also known as *Al Qabliah*, which means tribes' Khanjar (see Figure 71). It is characterised by the following features.



Figure 71 *Al Ganobi Khanjar* © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: The handle comes in two forms:
 - First Design: This handle shares the design of the *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini*, and *Al Suri Khanjars* (see Figure 46 and 72).



Figure 72 First handle design of the *Al Ganobi Khanjar* © Khalid Al Busaidi

- Second Design: This handle shares the same design of the *Al Suri Khanjar* handle (see Figure 73).



Figure 73 Al Sifani handle on an Al Ganobi Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Scabbard cover: The entire scabbard is covered with silver. The main area of this type of Khanjar is covered with silver designs in al qala style, with a leather belt added to the top of it. Occasionally there will be another belt added to the top of it with a bullet holder (see Figure 74).



Figure 74 Scabbard of the Al Ganobi Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

6. The *Al Hanshiah* Khanjar

This kind of Khanjar is associated with the people of the desert in the *Ash Sharqiah* governorate, in the east of the Sultanate. This type of Khanjar is long like the *Al Ganobi* Khanjar. It is characterised by being small and lightweight, which explains its frequent use by the people of the desert (see Figure 75). It is characterized by the following:



Figure 75 The *Al Hanshiah* Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: This handle shares the design characteristics of the *Al Suri* and *Al Ganobi* handle (see Figure 76).



Figure 76 *Al Sifani* handle in *Al Hanshiah* Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Scabbard cover: All of this area is covered with leather and is undecorated. A leather belt is attached to the top of it, and another belt with a bullet holder may be added to the top of that (see Figure 77).



Figure 77 Scabbard cover of Al Hanshiah Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Khanjar types differences

Al Hanshiah	Al Ganobi	Al Suri	Al Batini	Al Nizwani	Al Saidi 3	Al Saidi 2	Al Saidi 1	Khanjar name
Edges without design	Edges without design	Edges without design	Edges without design	Edges without design	Full cover design	Full cover design	Edges without design	Handle material
gold	silver or gold	silver or gold	Silver	Silver	silver or gold	Silver	silver or gold	Handle cover
Al Qala	Al Qala	Al Qala	Al Qala	Al Qala	Al Tikasir	Al Tikasir	Al Tikasir	Scabbard upper cover
Non	Non	4	4	4	4	7	7	Belt holder rings
Leather	Silver	Silver / gold & leather	Silver	Silver	Thread & silver / gold	Silver	Thread & silver / gold	Scabbard cover
Non	Non	semi circular	semi circular	straight line	straight line	straight line	straight line	Chape

Ancient un-named Omani Khanjars

Some ancient Khanjars are privately owned and have been inherited from parents and grandparents, while others are located in museums. With or without a defined geographical provenance they still contribute to the typology of the Khanjar.

One Ancient khanjar with a proven geographical provenance

The Khanjar in this example belongs to the *Ad Dahirah* governorate and it is on display in the *Bait Al Zubair* Museum (see Figure 78), and features the following specifications:



Figure 78 The ancient Ad Dahirah governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: This handle shares the same design as the *Al Nizwani and Al Batini* Khanjar handles with a T-shape. The ferrule design is in the al qala style (see Figure 79).



Figure 79 Handle of The ancient Ad Dahirah governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Scabbard upper cover: The designs on the scabbard upper cover area are in the form of twigs wrapped in a circular motion, comprising three circles connected by small leaves. The designs in this area are of al qala design, which can be found on the *Al Batini* Khanjar (see Figure 80).



Figure 80 Scabbard upper cover of the ancient Ad Dahirah governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Belt holder: The belt holder is slanted. There are four rings on the belt holder; the two outer rings have a conical head shape which can be found on the *Al Nizwani* Khanjar (see Figure 81).



Figure 81 Belt holder of the ancient Ad Dahirah governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Scabbard cover: This is covered with silver. This type of Khanjar is designed in the al qala style (see Figure 82).



Figure 82 Scabbard cover of the ancient Ad Dahirah governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. Chape: This chape shares the same design as that of the *Al Batini* chape, where the dividing line between the al mekhalh and the chape is semi-circular; the designs in this area are in the al qala style with the same design on the scabbard upper cover (see Figure 83).



Figure 83 Chape of Ad Dahirah governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Two Ancient khanjars with a proven geographical provenance

The Khanjar in this example belongs to the *Al Wusta* governorate and it is on display in the *Bait Al Zubair* Museum (see Figure 84), and features the following specifications:



Figure 84 The Al Wusta governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: This handle shares the same design as that of the *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* Khanjar handles, but it is a little shorter, and is mixed with the *Al Sifani* handle as well. It is covered with al tikasir silver design carvings from the top and to the bottom of the ferrule with the left side edges without design silver, exposing the original handle material. The same pattern can be found in the first *Al Saidi* handle design (see Figure 85).



Figure 85 Handle of the Al Wusta governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Scabbard upper cover: The design on the scabbard upper cover area comes in overlapping square motifs with Omani and Islamic motifs surrounding a circular shape in the middle. The same designs can be found on the *Al Saidi* scabbard upper cover too (see Figure 86).



Figure 86 Scabbard upper cover of the Al Wusta governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Belt holder: This kind of Khanjar comes with seven rings, three on the scabbard cover and four in the belt holder area. Connecting them are silver wires in the form of a strand of twisted wires known locally as *sim mahius*. Another feature of this area is the presence of two outer rings. They have a conical head shape which can be found on the *Al Nizwani* Khanjar (see Figure 87).



Figure 87 Belt holder of the Al Wusta governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Scabbard cover: This area is covered by silver wire, in the form of *sim mahius*. What distinguishes this kind of Khanjar is that these

silver wire strings exist only on the lower half of both the *al chandah*, and *al mekhalh*. The design consists of *al tikasir* silver. The scabbard cover area is shaped diagonally from the top to the chape. This can only be found in the *Al Suri Khanjar*. Linking area of *Al Mekhalh* and the Belt silver chain are small balls called *mirqat*, which are attached to *al mekhalh* with the belt to make the Khanjar slant when you wear it (see Figure 88).



Figure 88 Scabbard cover of the Al Wusta governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. Chape: This chape shares the same design as the *Al Saidi* chape. The design is in *al tikasir* style with the same designs on the scabbard upper cover (see Figure 89).



Figure 89 Scabbard cover of the Al Wusta governorate Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Ancient Khanjars without a proven geographical provenance

There are many examples of ancient, un-named Omani Khanjars that have not been officially recorded as belonging to the known Khanjar categories, and whose historical provenance is difficult to determine exactly (see Figure 90, 91, 92, and 93). The following four figures represent them:



Figure 90 Golden Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 91 Golden Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 92 Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 93 Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The modern Omani Khanjar

Contemporary Omani Khanjar makers have a different approach from traditional Khanjar makers; they merge or mix the specifications of more than one type of Khanjars to create novel types that do not belong to known typographies. The old generation of Khanjar makers is nonetheless still committed to maintaining custom and never deviate from the traditional specifications identified above.

Still younger Khanjar makers have adopted a more spirited approach than their parent craftsmen. The following examples illustrate the forms of modern Omani Khanjars.

Client specifications, the impact of commodity culture and the collapse of tradition

Contemporary Khanjar makers are ready to make Khanjars such as those follow the typology of forms but regulated by the desire for decoration rather than the need for geographical identity. The Khanjar has begun to detach itself from tradition and region and is becoming a sign for Omani national identity.

Contemporary pan-Omani Khanjars

1. A khanjar with two handles



Figure 94 Khanjar with two handles © Khalid Al Busaidi

i. Handle: This type is characterised by having two handles of different types and shapes. The reason for the existence of two handles in this Khanjar is the desire of the owner to replace the handle when he wears it on different occasions. The main specifications are:

- First handle (*Al Saidi*): The handle is covered with al tikasir silver design carvings over the entire top to the down of the ferrule with the edges without any designs in the silver, revealing the handle's material (black plastic) (see Figure 95).



Figure 95 Al Saidi style khanjar handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

- Second Design (*Al Batin*): This handle design made from white plastic. It is decorated with very thin nails with accurate Islamic pattern. The ferrule traditionally should be engraved in al qalia style, but this ferrule is marked with al tikasir engravings even though the style is traditionally reserved for the *Al Saidi* style only (see Figure 96).



Figure 96 Al Batini handle style khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Scabbard upper cover: The design on the scabbard upper cover area comes with al tikasir designs, and the silver overlays black plastic to harmonise between the scabbard upper cover and both handles when replacing one with the other (see Figure 97).



Figure 97 Scabbard upper cover with al tikasir design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Belt holder: There are four rings in the belt holder. Also featuring in this Khanjar are the two rings on the outside with the conical head shape. All four rings have been formed in a way known locally as *mahious* or *maftool*, the form of which can only be found in new Khanjars (see Figure 98).



Figure 98 Belt holder with twisted rings of Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Scabbard cover: The scabbard is covered with sewn silver wire mixed with black thread. It shares the same design with that of the *Al Nizwani* and *Al Batini* style Khanjar. The reason for adding black colour thread is to harmonise with the same colour found on the handle, ferrule and scabbard upper cover. This is not a traditional practice (see Figure 99).



Figure 99 Al Batini style scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

- v. Chape: The dividing line between the al mekhalh and the chape is semi-circular and that can be found in the *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* Khanjar only. The designs are Al Tkasir style the same design as that of the *Al Saidi* style, therefore representing a merger between the traditional *Al Batini* Khanjar and *Al Saidi* Khanjar specifications (see Figure 100).



Figure 100 Semi-circle shape with al tikasir design © Khalid Al Busaidi

2. Craftsmen embellishment- The loss of traditionally specific style

The following Khanjar specifications reveal how new generation Khanjar makers neglect traditional decorative practices in order to make their work more desirable in a commodity market disconnected from regional cultural practice. The following Khanjar combines the styles of *Al Saidi*, *Al Batini*, and *Al Suri* Khanjars (see Figure 101).



Figure 101 Contemporary khanjar design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Handle: The handle is made of wood, and it is decorated in Islamic patterns with very thin nails that are similar to *Al Batini* handles, while the *al tikasir* silver ferrule design is usually associated with the *Al Saidi* Khanjar (specifically the third design mentioned previously) (see Figure 102).



Figure 102 Al Batini style handle design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- i. Scabbard upper cover: The design on the upper scabbard area is al tikasir style following *Al Saidi* principles. However, the designs in the form of a set of parallel straight lines also have al qala elements with additional wavy lines, all combined for aesthetic purposes (see Figure 103).



Figure 103 Scabbard upper cover with al tikasir design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- ii. Belt holder: There are four rings in the belt holder. As in the previous example above, this is a new design and has no roots in tradition practices (see Figure 104).



Figure 104 Belt holder with twisted rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iii. Scabbard cover: This kind of design can be found on *Al Suri Khanjars* only (see Figure 105).



Figure 105 Al Suri scabbard cover matched with Al Batini khanjar design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- iv. Chape: The dividing line between the *al mekhalh* chape is semi-circular and can be found in the *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* Khanjars only; the design is the same as on the scabbard upper constituting a merger between the *Al Batini* and *Al Saidi* Khanjar specifications (see Figure 106).



Figure 106 Semi-circle chape with al tikasir design © Khalid Al Busaidi

There are many examples of modern Omani Khanjars that combine traditional elements in ways that make the Khanjars attractive to the consumer who has no longer any contact with traditional knowledge of what the Khanjar should look like (see Figure 107, 108, 109, and 110).



Figure 107 New khanjar design © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 108 New khanjar design © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 109 New khanjar design © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 110 New khanjar design © Khalid Al Busaidi

Fake Khanjars

The Omani Khanjar is a symbol and an identity of the country and it is recognised by Khanjar makers and specialists. It is also characterised by the specific criteria of the Public Authority for Craft Industries, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, and Ministry of Trade and Industry, under the Royal Decree No.87/1 which was released on 01/03/1978 and adopted in 2007 under the name of "Standard of Omani Khanjar". The standard was modified in 2013 within the framework of the Sultanate's keenness to preserve the legacies of authenticity and tradition and documenting those legacies, and determining the specifications and conditions of operation for the protection of inputs that may affect the distinctive character of Oman (Alsin'a'a, W. A. W. 1978, P 3).

In the late twentieth century, some khanjars alien to Omani society and not characterised by the Omani Khanjar specifications began to appear and formed a threat to the identity of Oman. Characterised by a counterfeit substance made of light copper, these Khanjars nonetheless have designs close to those found on real Omani Khanjar as well as Islamic and Omani decorations that are usually found in the authentic Omani Khanjars.

The government is making visible efforts to combat the sale and spread of counterfeit Khanjars that are sold in some local shops and imported from some Asian countries. There are other features that characterise fake Khanjars. They share all sorts of specifications with the Omani Khanjars (see Figure 111), making it difficult for many to distinguish between the original and fake Khanjar. The difference between them is the fake Khanjar made of aluminium or light steel and the original made of pure silver, also the fake Khanjar it has a lightweight. Unfortunately we find some young people acquiring and wearing such fake Khanjar on different occasions and most of these people do not have the experience and expertise in the Omani Khanjar especially the modern generation of young people (see Figure 112).

The following two photos illustrate the difference between the original Omani Khanjar with the correct standard specifications and a fake Khanjar:



Figure 111 On the left is a fake khanjar and on the right is the original Al Saida Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 112 Fake khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Chapter 3

Khanjar parts and Accessories

Parts of the Omani Khanjar

This chapter basically deals with the different parts of a Khanjar. It also depicts the basic and secondary accessories used in the manufacture of an Omani Khanjar.

The Omani Khanjar is a combination of many parts made in different places. It is a short curved sword shaped like the letter “j” and resembles a hook. It can be made from a variety of different materials depending on the quality of its craftsmanship. The interchangeability of parts allows the owners to upgrade their Khanjars down the ages.

List of Khanjar Parts

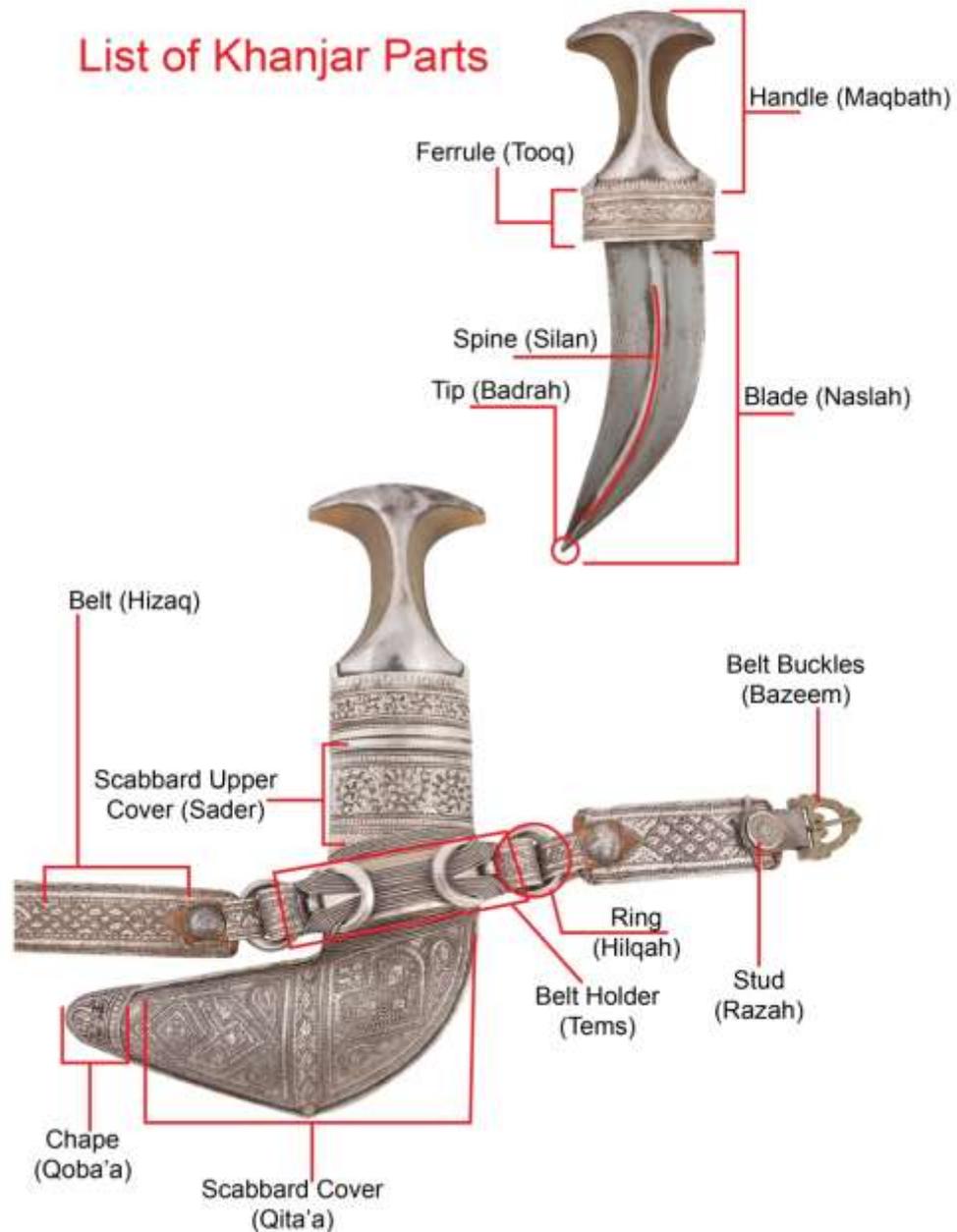


Figure 113 List of khanjar parts © Khalid Al Busaidi

The Khanjar knife consists of:

- Handle with its decorative and support elements.
- Blade.
- Decorative ferrule strengthening the joint between blade and handle.

Handle (*Maqbath*)

The Khanjar handle is connected to the blade (*Naslah*) with a joint between them surrounded by a decorative ferrule.

The shape and decorative detail of Khanjar handles is a key element in distinguishing the different types of Khanjars from different regions and Governates of the Sultanate.

Various raw and synthetic materials are used in making Khanjar handles. They are divided into two categories according to the quality and value of the handle.

First category

The first category comprises natural materials that are rare in part due to bans on trading them

- Rhinoceros horn handle, locally known as '*zaraf*' (giraffe).
- Elephant Tusk handle.
- Sandalwood handle.

Because of the paucity of access to new materials for rhinoceros handle and elephant tusk handle, some Khanjar craftsmen buy old Khanjars in order to use their rare handles in making new ones.

Khanjar craftsmen have also started using the alternative and more easily available materials in the second category.

Second category

Alternative materials that have become accepted for creating Khanjar handles include:

- Bitter Orange wood, locally known as '*kasha al nareng*'.
- Marble.
- White plastic, which when treated well can look very similar to elephant tusk handle.

Examples of different types of handle material are (see Figure 114).



Figure 114 Different khanjar handle materials © Khalid Al Busaidi

The price of Khanjar handles from the first or second categories varies up to 1000 Omani Riyals depends on the handle's width, colour and age as per the preferences of the owner.

Khanjar handles and their decoration are typically asymmetric. The front parts of Khanjar handles and the sides are easily visible and decorated, in some cases very highly. The back parts of Khanjar handles are very plain. In some cases, they are having some metal reinforcement extending partway or the full height of the handle.

Types of handles

There are five main types of Khanjar handles:

- Al Saidi
- Al Nizwani
- Al Batini
- Al Suri
- Al Sifani

The *Al Saidi* design is the most distinctive in terms of its use of precious metals and the shape of its pommel and quillons.

***Al Saidi* handle design**

There are two variants of the *Al Saidi* Khanjar handle. Both use a straight bottle shaped handle with a smaller pommel and quillons than the other Khanjar types and with the pommel and quillons developed in silver or gold. The decoration on *Al Saidi* Khanjars is typically symmetric in design at the front and back side of them.

***Al Saidi* handle design (1)**

The first variant of the *Al Saidi* Khanjar handle shows part of the underlying handle material under the silver or gold decorations (see Figure 115). The entire pommel boss and quillons are covered with *al tikasir* silver design carvings with a decorated embossed silver band at the handle grip and additional silver or gold decorations near to the ferrule



Figure 115 Handle of *Al Saidi* khanjar design (1) © Khalid Al Busaidi

***Al Saidi* handle design (2)**

The second variant of the *Al Saidi* Khanjar handle (Error! Reference source not found.) is completely covered with *al tikasir* silver or gold decorations from the pommel to the ferrule. The material used in making the handle, typically horn, is not visible because it is fully covered (see Figure 116).



Figure 116 Handle of *Al Saidi* khanjar design (2) © Khalid Al Busaidi

***Al Nizwani* and *Al Suri* handle design**

The *Al Nizwani* and *Al Suri* types of Khanjar handles have a T shaped pommels and quillons. The front of the handle is plainly decorated and

reinforced with a silver plate, with the underlying handle material being visually dominant (see Figure 117). Typically, the back of the handle is not covered with any piece of silver.



Figure 117 Design of handle of Al Nizwani khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

***Al Batini* handle design**

The *Al Batini* handle design was traditionally made from elephant tusk. Today they are more common made from textured marble or plastic or wood according to the wishes of the owner of the Khanjar. The *Al Batini* Khanjar type is distinguished by the way it is decorated with very large numbers of tiny silver or gold pins or rather, thin nails, accurately following Islamic patterns (see Figure 118).



Figure 118 Al Batini khanjar handle decorated with silver nails © Khalid Al Busaidi

***Al Sifani* handle design**

The *Al Sifani* design for Khanjar handle is characterised by two star shaped decorations on the front of the handle and a band around the middle of the handgrip, which may be embossed or non-embossed. (See **Error! Reference**

source not found. and Error! Reference source not found.) One star is in the pommel and the other immediately above the ferrule, the middle part of the handle has a small rectangular plate, which may be embossed or non-embossed. The star shape is locally called *Al Shams* which mean sun. This type of handle is named after the *Bani Saif* family in the *As Sharqiah* Governorate on the eastern side of the Sultanate. This family was well known for this type of handle styles, according to Omani Khanjar makers (see Figure 119 and 120).



Figure 119 Typical handle of Al Sifani khanjar with golden decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi

Figure 120 Typical handle of Al Sifani khanjar with silver decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi

Handle lining

Backs of Khanjar handle when worn are hidden from view. Typically, the backs of Khanjar handles are supported by a silver reinforcement that is not decorated. It is locally known as *Bitan*. Because it's lining covers the back of the handle. Thus it gives the handle a kind of support against breaking and acts as an agent to reduce wear of the handle itself.

The *bitan* comes in two types:

- Full (Bitan kamil).
- Half (Nos bitan).

Full (Bitan Kamil)

This covering of the back portion of a Khanjar handle from ferrule to the pommel and quillions fully corresponds to the front silver plate of the *Al*

Nizwani Khanjar (see Figure 121). This back treatment of handles can be found in the *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* Khanjar types.



Figure 121 Back part of a khanjar handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

Half (Nos Bitan)

The back part of some Khanjars are reinforced with a layer from ferrule to pommel (See figure 122) Typically, this is a thick silver sheet to give more support, and can be found in the *Al Sifani* and *Al Suri* Handles (see Figure 122).



Figure 122 Half support to the back of a khanjar handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

Top of Pommel

Except for the *Al Saidi* Khanjars, the top of the pommel of Khanjar handles is often decorated with silver plates mostly in the form of geometric shapes locally known as *shamarikh*. Khanjar makers arrange these with an aesthetic eye to give a beautiful touch to the handle. They are found in *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* Khanjars (see Figure 123).



Figure 123 Decoration on the top of the handle of Al Nizwani, Al Batini and Al Suri Khanjars
© Khalid Al Busaidi

Blade (*Naslah*)

The broad curved blade (*naslah*) of khanjar is made of steel, sharpened on both edges (see Figure 124). The curve of the khanjar blade results in the tip pointing around 30 degrees to the handle. The curved broad blade offers leverage. The blade has a pronounced symmetric spine (*silan*) on both sides to reinforce it. This follows the centreline of the blade from the short tang scabbard mouth to the tip (*badrah*) of the blade.

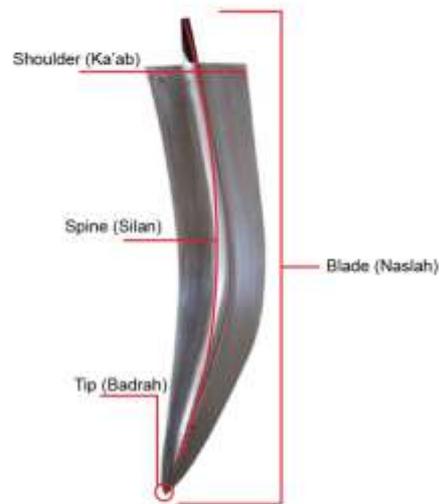


Figure 124 Elements of the khanjar blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

The blade strength and edge sharpness depends on the type of steel material it is made of. Typically this is a high performance alloy spring steel. Historically, it is believed that the khanjar would have been made from *Wootz* alloy steel from Southern India traded across the Middle East around 1000AD and later known as *Damascus* steel. Tradition says that such blades can even chop through a skewer of steel.

The khanjar blade is attached to the handle by the tang (*Al Mogaraq*) and shoulder (*ka'ab*) of the blade being embedded in the handle. A metal ferrule (*tooq*) typically silver is fitted around the lower part of the handle where the blade enters it. The ferrule (*tooq*) reinforces the handle and stops it's splitting when the knife is levered or twisted.

Ferrule (*Tooq*)

The ferrule (*tooq*) surrounds the handle covering the section in which the blade is embedded in the handle (see Figure 125).

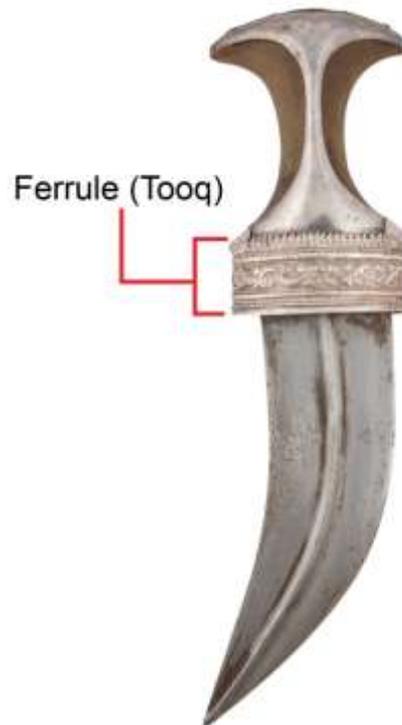


Figure 125 Ferrule © Khalid Al Busaidi

In practical terms, the ferrule (*tooq*) has two roles:

- To reinforce the joint between handle and blade by stopping the handle splitting if the blade is twisted.
- To retain the knife in the scabbard. The ferrule and the upper part of the scabbard overlap. The retaining is by friction or slight over centre spring locking action in which ridges on both ferrule and scabbard cover click over each other.
- The ferrule covers the joint.

It also has three aesthetic roles:

- It covers from viewing the manufacturing cuts and glue of the joint between blade and handle.

- It is a cylindrical piece of art engraved, inlaid or decorated with Omani inscriptions. It is made of silver and sometimes has golden inscriptions or detail.
- Visually, the ferrule mediates between the handle and the blade, and between the knife and the scabbard.



Figure 126 Example of silver ferrule decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi

In earlier times, the ferrule was engraved on the front side only as the back of the ferrule, like the back of the knife handle, was hidden against the user's clothing when worn. More recently, it is increasingly common for the ferrule to be decorated on both front and back as the silver and gold decoration work has become technically easier with modern methods.

The decorations on the ferrule are similar to the ones on the scabbard upper cover and chape.

Scabbard upper cover (*sader*)

Locally known as *sader*, the scabbard upper cover covers and reinforces the opening of the scabbard for the khanjar blade and provides one of the important aesthetic decorative elements of the khanjar. The scabbard upper cover is decorated with silver carvings of Omani design. Their ornate engravings of different forms and decorations of scabbard upper covers characterise and distinguish different khanjars. For example, the *al tikasir* design is used for the *Al Saidi* khanjar, and the *al qala* design is used for other types of Omani khanjars.

The engravings on the upper scabbard cover match the engravings on the ferrule and chape. The upper scabbard cover (*sader*) and the ferrule of the knife (*toog*) form a functional and aesthetic pair (see Figure 127).



Figure 127 Examples of upper scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

The upper scabbard cover forms a cap covering the open end of the scabbard with an opening, the scabbard mouth (*Al Mogaraq*), to match the blade (see Figure 128).



Figure 128 The mouth entry of the khanjar blade on the scabbard upper cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

The overlapping joint between the knife ferrule (*tooq*) and the top of the scabbard cover when the blade is fitted in the scabbard is locally known as *Qofil*. It is the non-embossed piece on top of the scabbard upper cover in (see Figure 129).

Some owners ask the khanjar makers to make the area of the scabbard upper cover a little longer in order to show the more of the khanjar while wearing a *Shal*. A *shawl* is a piece of fabric similar to a turban wrapped around the khanjar on special occasions such as weddings. The *shawl* covers much of the khanjar and hides many of its parts.



Figure 129 Omani man wearing shawl on the top of a khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Scabbard (Ghomed)

The khanjar scabbard comprises:

- The upper scabbards cover (*sader*).
- The wooden scabbard core made of two pieces (*shohf*).
- The decorated leather scabbards cover (*qita'a*).
- The chape (*qoba'a*).
- The belt attachment (*tems*).

Wooden scabbard core (*Shohf*)

The scabbard core is made of wood to hold the khanjar blade. The shape of the wooden scabbard echoes and emphasises the curved shape of the khanjar blade. Whereas the khanjar blade is curved by around 30 degrees, the khanjar scabbard is often curved to almost 90 degrees (see Figure 130).

The hollow scabbard is made of two pieces of wood (*shohf*) carved as a pair and glued together.



Figure 130 Carved hollow wooden scabbard core after gluing and ready to have other elements attached © Khalid Al Busaidi

Scabbard Cover (*Qita'a*)

The khanjar scabbard (*qita'a*) cover fits over the wooden scabbard core. It is asymmetric, that is, it is different front and back. The front face of the scabbard cover provides the foundation for ornate decoration. The scabbard cover has a curved crescent-shape to match the wooden

scabbard core. The front of the scabbard cover is typically made of sheepskin decorated with sewing in a variety of forms and motifs (see Figure 131). It is locally referred to as *sim* or *eias*, and the front face of the scabbard cover is typically decorated by sewing silver or mixed silver and gold colour wire or sometimes nylon with the decorations different depending on the type of khanjar.



Figure 131 Front face of scabbard cover with some ornate sewing in silver wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

Visually, khanjar makers and experts regard the leather front of the scabbard cover being divided into three parts (see Figure 132):

- ***Al Shandah***: is the upper part of the cover and the sector behind which the knife mainly sits behind and is located from the area of the belt holder (*tems* see below) downwards.
- ***Al Mokasar***: it is a separation line between the two main sections and follows the longitudinal line of the khanjar scabbard.
- ***Al Mekhalah***: the second sector follows the tail for the scabbard to the chape.

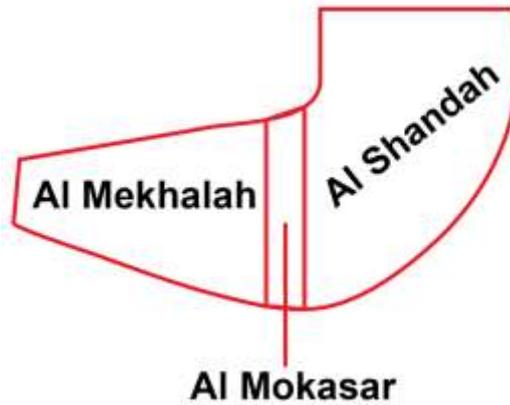


Figure 132 Three sections of the front of the scabbard cover below the belt attachment © Khalid Al Busaidi

The front and back of the scabbard cover are sewn together using a silver wire in a running cable stitch known locally as *al zami* as shown in (see Figure 133).



Figure 133 Stitching front to back and decorative stitching on Al Shandah sector of scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

The back of the scabbard cover, which remains concealed from view when worn, is covered with a soft brushed broadcloth cloth locally known as *Bitan* (see Figure 134) made of fabric which is a type of velvet.

The fabric back of the scabbard cover is fitted after the main strap of the belt holder (*tems*) and has been attached to the scabbard before the rings.



Figure 134 Fabric back of scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

Belt Holder (*Tems*)

It is a rectangular ribbon made of leather located in the middle of the khanjar and it is found under the scabbard upper cover. The leather is usually made of cow skin. This item locally known as "*hizaq*" is important as it helps to hold the belt.

Once it has been installed on the scabbard, the belt holder is covered on the outside with a silver plate. After that, the tops of the two rings are installed opposite to each other. The other two rings have pyramid shapes at the end of the belt holder, which is locally known under three different names, as *Al Khizaim*, *Tiars*, *Emama*, and these types of rings can only be found on the *Al Saidi* and *Al Nizwani* khanjars (see Figure 135).

In the end, the khanjar makers do the final touch to finish the last step to complete the belt holder by installing silver wire and passing it around this area. Locally known as "*sim*", it is installed in a professional manner on the both the front and back-side of this area to give an aesthetic touch to the khanjar. This wire is made of twisted silver wire (see Figure 136).



Figure 135 Final looks of the belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 136 Final view of a belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

Silver rings come in three types:

Plain ring: It is a non-engraved, circular silver ring formed to the shape and size desired. These rings are found in all types of Omani khanjars (see Figure 137).



Figure 137 Final view of a plain ring © Khalid Al Busaidi

Plain ring with a conical head: It is a non-engraved, circular silver ring and it has silver wire in the form of a conical head. This kind of ring is locally known by several names: *Khazaim*, *Turs* and *Emama*. *Emama* means turban, and the reason it is given this name in Arabic is because of the shape, which is usually found in *Al Nizwani* and *Al Saidi* khanjars only. However nowadays this type of ring is present in all other types of khanjar based on the desire of the owner of the khanjar or the khanjar makers (see Figure 138).



Figure 138 Final look of a plain ring with a conical head © Khalid Al Busaidi

Twist ring: It is a silver wire rolled around in part to form a loop or twist. This kind of ring forms a pigtail or curled shape locally known as *Al Maftool* or *Al Mahius*. This is a modern ring shaped one and is present in many of the newly manufactured Omani khanjars (see Figure 139).



Figure 139 Final look of a twisted ring © Khalid Al Busaidi

Chape (Qoba'a)

The chape is a silver piece and forms the final part of the curve in the khanjar, coming after the scabbard cover, and also serves as the final cover for the lower part of the scabbard (see Figure 141).

To give final touches to the beauty of the khanjar, the chape usually has inscriptions matching the scabbard upper cover and ferrule. The designs are engraved in the *Al Tikasir* style or *Al Qala* style based on the type of khanjar (see Figure 140).



Figure 140 Final looks of the chape © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 141 Location of the chape in the khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The chape comes in two forms as follows:

Straight chape: When the dividing line between the *Al Mekhalah* area of the scabbard cover and the chape is in a straight line. This kind of chape exists in all types of Omani khanjars except the *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* khanjar (see Figure 142).



Figure 142 Shape of a straight chape © Khalid Al Busaidi

Semi-circular chape: The dividing line between the *Al Mekhalah* area of scabbard cover and the chape is semi-circular. This kind of chape exists in the *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* khanjar only (see Figure 143).



Figure 143 Shape of a semi-circular chape © Khalid Al Busaidi

From this sector one can identify the particular type of Omani khanjar or discern which province it belongs to, according to the specifications required by the owner of the khanjar.

The scabbard cover has a variety of designs that match with inscriptions on the belt.

There are four types of scabbard covers:

- The scabbard cover covered the first half by strings of thread and the second half with silver which can be found in the first and second types of *Al Saida* khanjar (see Figure 144).



Figure 144 Scabbard cover of Al Saida khanjar first and second design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- The scabbard cover sewn with silver wire, or sometimes mixed with gold wire can be found in the *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* khanjars. If the cover is mixed with golden colour then it will be found in the *Al Suri* khanjar only (see Figure 145).



Figure 145 Scabbard cover of Al Nizwani, Al Batini and Al Suri khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- The scabbard cover sewn with silver wires and sometimes mixed with golden wire leaves some parts blank to show the leather it is made of, exists only in the *Al Suri* khanjar (see Figure 146).



Figure 146 Scabbard cover of the Al Suri khanjar second design © Khalid Al Busaidi

- The scabbard cover is tailored with strands of silver or gold velvet, and sometimes mixed with some other colours to make the decoration work. If this sector is wholly covered with thread, then this kind of scabbard cover exists in the *Al Sidi* khanjar third type only (see Figure 147).



Figure 147 Scabbard cover of Al Sidi khanjar third design © Khalid Al Busaidi

The Basic and Secondary Accessories in the Omani khanjar

The basic and secondary accessories are complementary parts of an Omani khanjar. They may be essential for being a basic part to support the khanjar such as the Belt or Stud. It can be used as a secondary item that depends on the daily life of the owner such as Tweezers or Eyeliner.

The Basic Accessories in the Omani khanjar

Belt (*Hezaq*)

It is a two-piece accessory separated from each other and made of leather – natural or artificial – with one piece longer than the other. It is sewn with beautiful engravings of silver wires mixed with gold-coloured wires. At times mixed with "nylon wire" in some khanjars. The longer part of the belt is locally known as *Hezaq* and the shorter part as *Tabligha* (see Figure 148).

The belt works to help the person to wear the khanjar, while the role of the *Binnao* is to adjust the belt depending on the size of the wearer.



Figure 148 Side view of how to lock the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

The back side (not visible), locally known as *Bitan*, is covered with a luxurious fabric broadcloth that is a type of velvet and linked to the front of the belt, while the back lining of the belt is sewn with silver wire in a fashionable aesthetic called *Al Zami*.

To add beauty to the khanjar, the khanjar makers with their skills and artistry works introduce aesthetic touches by matching the inscriptions on the belt with the scabbard cover in most of the Omani khanjars (see Figure 149), except for *the Al Saidi* khanjar that does not match the pattern of the belt with the designs on the scabbard cover.



Figure 149 Final look of the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 150 Close-up view of a small part of the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

Stud (Razah or Fatkhah)

It is a decorated circular silver piece that is similar to a clothing button. It is linked from the back with two wires that can be folded (see Figure 150). The khanjar makers insert the wires of the stud inside a small hole located at the end of the belt, and then they fold the two wires in opposite directions and fix them at the tips of the belt from both sides (see Figure 151).



Figure 151 Final view of the stud © Khalid Al Busaidi

There are two studs on each part of the belt, one of which fixes the belt to the two rings on each side of the belt holder, while the other stud holds the belt with belt buckles or baldric (see Figure 152).



Figure 152 Location of the studs on the khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Belt Buckle (*Bazeem*)

It is a semi-circular silver piece that has simple design; it is fixed in the short part of the belt and hold by the stud (see Figure 153 and 154).



Figure 153 Final looks of the belt buckle © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 154 Location where the belt buckle attaches to the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

Baldric (*Benaw*)

It is a piece of leather that is fixed to the longest part of the belt by using the stud and it has many holes for various waist size measurements (see Figure 155 and 156).



Figure 155 Final look of a baldric © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 156 Location where the baldric attaches to the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

The Secondary Accessories in the Omani khanjar

Wallet (*Bakhsha*)

It is a piece of leather that looks like a small wallet. A silver piece with Omani inscriptions is fixed on the front side of the wallet and has the same inscriptions of the scabbard upper cover to complete the aesthetic side of the khanjar (see Figure 158). It is also fixed on the short part of the belt. In the past people used the wallet to keep coins inside it but nowadays it is used as an accessory only, and this kind of wallet is found mostly in the *Al Suri* khanjar (see Figure 157).



Figure 157 Final look of a wallet © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 158 Location where the wallet attaches to the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tweezers (*Minqash*)

It is a pointed copper or silver piece connected to a short chain and fixed on the longest part of the belt. Previously it was used to remove tiny pieces of thorn that get into the hands or feet but now it is used as

an accessory, and can be found mostly in the *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* khanjars (see Figure 159).



Figure 159 Final look of the tweezers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Eyeliners and holder (*Merwad* and *Mikehal*)

It has two pieces: firstly eyeliner locally known as *Marwad*, and secondly a holder locally known as *Mikehal* made of silver. The eyeliner is not sharp (so that it does not cause harm to the eye), while the holder looks like a bullet and has a cover on the top of it (see Figure 160). The two pieces are linked with a small chain and fixed on the longer part of the belt, and can be found mostly in the *Al Nizwani* and *Al Suri* khanjars (see Figure 161).



Figure 160 Final look of an eyeliner © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 161 Location where the eyeliner attaches to the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

Knife (*Sakeen*)

It is a small knife that has a silver handle. Usually it has some Omani inscription designs and kept inside a wallet made of leather. The knife is attached to the back of the scabbard upper cover by using a small silver wire, and fixed in a curved angle in which its handle appears from the right side of the khanjar (see Figure 163)., and can be found mostly in the *Al Nizwani* and *Al Suri* khanjars (see Figure 162).



Figure 162 Final look of a knife © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 163 Location where the knife attaches to the back of the khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Chapter 4

Manufacture, Tools, and materials

Creating the Omani khanjar

This chapter is in three parts and deals with the process of manufacture of the khanjar, the material used and the tools and machinery needed. There is a degree of overlapping and repetition of information as the varying parts of the manufacturing areas are assessed by different processes and perspectives. A short story that contextualises the making process in terms of a narrative is included in the appendix 2. The following chapter is in a report form.

The main steps of making the khanjar are:

- Making the handle
- Forging the blade
- Making the scabbard
- Decoration
- Making the accessories

Part One. Making the khanjar

Handle Making (Maqbath)

The handle (*maq bath*) is attached to the blade (*naslah*). The shape, material and decoration of a handle lead to make different types of khanjars used in the Governorates of the Sultanate. Examples of different shapes, material and decoration of Khanjar handles are shown in (see Figure 164).



Figure 164 Different types of handle shape © Khalid Al Busaidi

The craftsperson's choice of materials for the khanjar handle depends on the request of a khanjar owner; whether the handle is made of the first category materials (rhinoceros handle, elephant tusk handle, and sandalwood handle) or the second category (handle of bitter orange wood, a marble handle, or plastic).

Making the handle of *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini*, and *Al Suri* khanjars

The craftsperson first chooses a piece of the appropriate material required for making the handle. The following describes a handle made of sandalwood. A similar process is used for other materials too (see Figure 165).



Figure 165 Piece of wood selected for a khanjar handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

The size of the piece of wood is chosen in this case with reference to a piece of steel representing a silver inset for the handle (see Figure 166).



Figure 166 Comparing wood pieces to a template for the silver handle face © Khalid Al Busaidi

The size of the silver face piece is drawn on the wood along with a rough overall outline of the handle shape (see Figure 167).



Figure 167 Marking the silver faceplate area and the handle outline © Khalid Al Busaidi

The handle piece is roughly cut into shapes using a hacksaw with a wood or plastic cutting coarse tooth blade, locally known as *mukhtah* or *minshar* (see Figure 168 and 169).



Figure 168 Clamping of the wood sample in a vice in order to cut © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 169 Cutting of the handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

The handle is then shaped freehand using rasps and files by the eye and experience of the craftsperson until the shape is aesthetically and practically acceptable (see Figure 170 and 171).



Figure 170 Starts to smoothen the edge of a handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

Figure 171 Starts to smoothen the edge of another handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

It is then polished using finer files (*mishal*) and abrasive paper and a circular sanding machine until the handle forms the correct shape as required. These stages are used to give the handle a smooth texture and comfortable fit so that it will not hurt anyone when the handle is held.

The final stage is to decorate the handle. The decoration and designs on the handle are chosen to match the ones in the scabbard upper cover and the ferrule (see Figure 172).



Figure 172 Sequence of creating a handle from rough cut to decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi

Different Types of Handels

1. The Handle with One Silver Piece (Uncarved design)

Install the flat silver piece (not embossed) with the same form of the handle on the front and back. The edges of the handle are left uncovered (see Figure 173), while the top of the handle has small silver pieces added in geometric forms (see Figure 174). When these pieces are fitted specifically to complement the aesthetics of the handle, it is locally known as *shamarikh*. The khanjar makers arrange these plates with corresponding aesthetic touches on the handle (see Figure 175).



Figure 173 Flat silver piece in front of a handle © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 174 Small silver pieces with geometric shapes on the top of a handle

Figure 175 Al Batini khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

2. The Handle with a Carved Silver Covering

This handle is covered with *Al Tikasir* silver designs from the entire top to the bottom of the ferrule with the left side edges without any silver designs (see Figure 176). The designs match the ones on the scabbard upper cover and the ferrule (see Figure 177). However, the back side of the handle is kept uncovered. This type of handle is only used in the first and second type of *Al Saidi* khanjar design, which distinguishes it from the other types of khanjars.



Figure 176 Handle of a Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 177 Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

3. The Handle with Silver Nails

It is formed with traditional designs by using delicate silver nails. The handle's front and the edges are left plain (see Figure 178, 179, and 180).



Figure 178 Different materials of handles © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 179 Tool to install silver nails and the final shape © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 180 Al Batini khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

4. The handle with some written script

Some verses of the Holy Quran are engraved on this type of handle by using a permanent ink. Alternately, the verses are inscribed using nails (see Figure 181).



Figure 181 Khanjar with a writing script on the handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

5. The handle with large nails

The handle has traditional designs made by putting large silver nails on the front side, and leaving the handle's external edges. This type of handle is only used in the *Al Sifani* khanjar (see Figure 182 and 183).

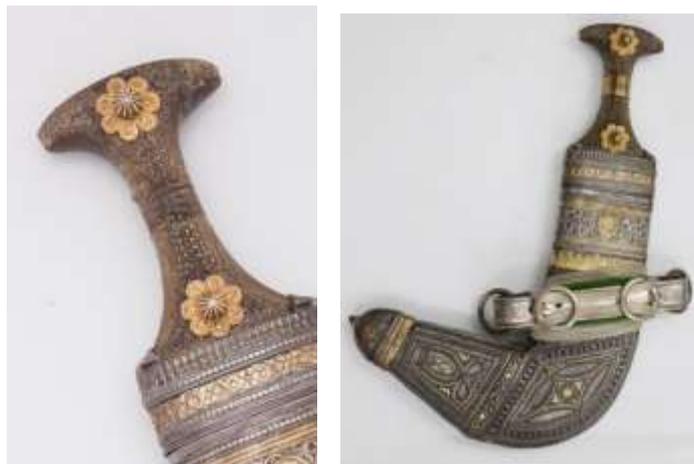


Figure 182 Al Sifani handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

Figure 183 Al Suri khanjar with Al Sifani handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

Forging the khanjar blade (naslah)

The khanjar craftsman is assisted by a blacksmith to forge the blade with its curved final shape, strong spine with the required edges and strength as requested (see Figure 184).



Figure 184 Blade in the final form © Khalid Al Busaidi

The steps for making the blade

Choose the appropriate steel material. The shape, strength and sharpness of khanjar blades depend on the type of steel used in making the blade. In some cases, steel is chosen that does not rust. Steel samples are appropriated from a range of sources. One of the most appropriate sources being used is modern alloy spring steel, which has exactly the most appropriate properties for a strong sharp knife blade and approximates the characteristics of the earlier Wootz and Damascus steel ingots. Samples of steel are cut to different sizes to give the volume of steel to make a khanjar blade (see Figure 185 and 186).



Figure 185 Example of source of steel used for making a khanjar blade © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 186 Khanjar blade and typical sample of steel © Khalid Al Busaidi

The khanjar blade is created by the following process:

- Steel piece to make khanjar blade is heated in brick furnace (*tan'noor*) until it is forgeable.
- Heated steel is squeezed to section by repeated rolling using a power roller and reheating.
- Steel section is manually bent whilst hot to give 30 degree curve in blade.
- Blade shape is cut to pattern using an angle grinder.
- Blade is sharpened and polished using power grinding tools and hand polishing.

First, a brick furnace, known as *tan'noor*, is heated by burning wood and sawdust. Interestingly the term for the furnace (*tan'noor*) is similar to the Indian name for a furnace (*tandoor*) in the region from which Wootz steel originated in the earlier days and is found in different forms from the Middle East to India (see Figure 187 and 188).



Figure 187 Lighting the tan'noor © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 188 Initial pre-heating of tan'noor © Khalid Al Busaidi

Clean the furnace from the leftover pieces of wood that is not needed and may cause smoke (see Figure 189 and 190).



Figure 189 Cleaning out wood before preheating © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 190 Removal of burnt and smoked wood © Khalid Al Busaidi

After the burnt wood from the pre-heating of the oven is removed, diesel is poured into a tube in the furnace and lit, and air is forced by fan into the furnace which causes the furnace to increase heat and temperature for heating the steel that will become the khanjar blade (see Figure 191).



Figure 191 Air is supplied by a fan after heating the furnace using diesel © Khalid Al Busaidi

Long-handled tongs are used to insert the selected piece of steel for the khanjar blade into the hottest part of the furnace. The furnace fan is turned off whilst the steel is inserted to protect the blacksmith (see Figure 192).



Figure 192 Inserting the steel piece that will become the khanjar blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

When the piece of steel is located correctly in the furnace, the fan is switched on again to heat the steel piece. The steel piece is heated in the furnace in this way for around ten minutes.

When the blacksmith judges the steel that has been heated sufficiently, the fan is turned off and the steel piece is removed from the furnace, which is at this stage almost white hot (see Figure 193).



Figure 193 Steel piece of khanjar blade being removed after heating © Khalid Al Busaidi

The steel piece when removed from the furnace is bright yellow but quickly COOLS (see Figure 194).



Figure 194 Steel piece just after removal from the furnace © Khalid Al Busaidi

The steel piece is then roll forged into a straight blade section using pressure rollers that at the same time create the sine of the blade (*silan*). The roll forging processes are undertaken while the steel is as hot as possible and malleable (see Figure 195).



Figure 195 Roll forging the steel piece © Khalid Al Busaidi

The rolling process is repeated three times before the steel piece cools too much to forge. Each time, before the steel piece is passed through the rollers, the rollers are adjusted to reduce the distance between them. Each passes through the rollers get flattened and stretched as it required (see Figure 196).



Figure 196 Blade sections at different stages of roll forging © Khalid Al Busaidi

When the steel piece is too cool to forge, it is reheated in the furnace (see Figure 197) to make it more malleable and the process will be repeated(see Figure 198).



Figure 197 Removal of a partly reheated forged blade piece © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 198 A partly forged blade after reheating © Khalid Al Busaidi

After the partly forged steel blade has been reheated in the furnace, it is inserted again between the two rolls for three consecutive times, each time with the rolls closer together (see Figure 199).



Figure 199 A partly roll forged blade after reheating © Khalid Al Busaidi

Overall, this heating and roll forging process is repeated around ten times until the blacksmith decides the length and shape of the steel piece is sufficient to create a khanjar blade. The figure below shows the partly forged

blades at different stages of the process with the blade section closer to the final blade size and shape (see Figure 200).



Figure 200 Partly forged khanjar blades © Khalid Al Busaidi

The blacksmith identifies the forging process is completed by comparing the steel piece with a standard blade pattern (see Figure 201), of which there are of different sizes and shapes.



Figure 201 Standard khanjar blade pattern © Khalid Al Busaidi

When the steel piece is rolled to an appropriate section and length, it is again inserted into the furnace to be heated for a few minutes to red heat and then hand forged into its curved shape.

The hand forming of the straight blade into its curved final form is undertaken using a manual forging die. This comprises of a specially shaped adjustable die fixed to a heavy steel plate. The adjustment allows the sides of the die to

fit snugly up to sides of the khanjar blade, which may be of different thicknesses. On the other side of the straight forged khanjar blade there is a curved forging metal tool which is adjustable to fit the blade (see Figure 202).



Figure 202 Curve handed blade forging tools © Khalid Al Busaidi

In operation, the red-hot straight khanjar section is inserted into the lower die whose sides are adjusted to fit closely to the sides of the blade underneath the spine of the blade. The upper tool is also fitted snugly to the blade.

Then the upper tool is struck with a sledge hammer several times to bend the blade section into an appropriate curve (see Figure 203). The clamping of the sides of the blade helps avoid buckling. Any buckling in the upper section of the blade is hammered flat as can be seen in the figure.



Figure 203 Blade section after bending with a hand forging tool © Khalid Al Busaidi

The final shape of the blade has to be precise as it must fit precisely with the scabbard and the handle. Each khanjar is made to a standard blade shape as defined by a pattern (see Figure 204).



Figure 204 Blade shaper with an appropriate size pattern © Khalid Al Busaidi

This pattern is laid on top of the newly forged and curved blade piece and the outline is marked with an indelible pen or pencil.

Following this outline, the rough khanjar blade is cut from the forged sample using an angle grinder (see Figure 205).



Figure 205 Cutting of the blade to an appropriate shape and trimming the spine and tang © Khalid Al Busaidi

The new rough cut khanjar blade has the curved pointed shape of the khanjar, it also has the shoulders and tang for fitting into the handle, and the spine is tapered towards the point of the blade (see Figure 206).



Figure 206 Blade after trimming to a particular shape © Khalid Al Busaidi

The difference can be seen in (see Figure 207).



Figure 207 Forged and curved blade section before and after trimming to a particular shape.
© Khalid Al Busaidi

The blacksmith uses a specially developed clamp to hold the khanjar blades whilst working on them (see Figure 208).



Figure 208 Clamp for holding khanjar blades for cutting and grinding © Khalid Al Busaidi

The bending of the khanjar blade, cutting it to shape and grinding it can sometimes result in the blade buckling or twisting. The blacksmith reshapes the blade by hammering it against an anvil (see Figure 209 and 210).



Figure 209 Straightening the outside of the blade © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 210 Straightening the inner curve of the blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

The rough blade should be cut into different sizes and shapes for the straightening process. Next step is to grind off any marks and imperfections followed by sharpening of the blade and polishing.

Most of this work is done on a rotating grinding wheel with relatively fine aluminium oxide grit. The first stage is to grind the rough edge to provide a sharpening bevel (see Figure 211).



Figure 211 Using fine grinding wheel on khanjar blade for initial sharpening © Khalid Al Busaidi

The blade is placed on both sides of the edges to form an approximately 60 degrees bevel (see Figure 212).

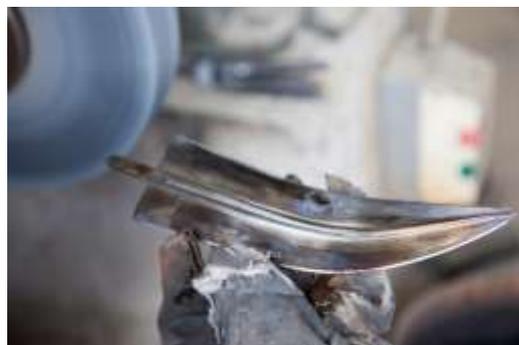


Figure 212 Rough sharpened blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

The grinding wheel is then used on the surfaces of the inner blade curve of the khanjar to remove any last traces of buckling, hammer marks and other imperfections (see Figure 213).



Figure 213 Inner curve of blade smoothed and polished using grinding wheel © Khalid Al Busaidi

The steel blade is then polished all over using the grinding wheel until it becomes both smooth and shiny (see Figure 214).



Figure 214 Khanjar blade in the process of being smoothed and polished all over © Khalid Al Busaidi

Many of the above grinding and polishing activities heat the blade significantly and, to continue working, the blacksmith cools the piece by dipping it into water.

Making the scabbard (*ghomed*)

When worn, the scabbard (*ghomed*) with its exaggerated shape and decoration contains the khanjar blade.

It comprises three different trades:

- The woodworking for the wooden scabbard core
- The leather and fabric work and detailed decorative needlework
- Decorative silverwork

Creating the wooden scabbard core

The scabbard core (*shohf*) is made of wood. A rough cut wooden scabbard shape is cut into two identical pieces (each called *al shahaf*) and each has a hollow for the blade carved into their matching faces. The halves of the scabbard core are then glued together to make a wooden sheath, which then forms the foundation for the scabbard upper cover, scabbard cover and chape with other decorative elements and attachment to the belt. The shape of the wooden core is defined by a leather pattern.

The figure below shows a sample of wood chosen to make the scabbard core (see Figure 215), a leather pattern for marking the outline to be cut, two sides to the core glued together and temporarily held with thread while the glue dries, and a finished scabbard core.



Figure 215 Elements of making wooden scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

The shape of the scabbard is marked using a pen on the selected piece of wood using the leather pattern, which replaces the need to calculate the measurements, curvature and size (see Figure 216).



Figure 216 Marking the shape of the scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

Following the drawn outline, the scabbard core is cut to approximate shape using a hand saw to remove most of the waste material (see Figure 217).



Figure 217 Removing the excess wood with a handsaw © Khalid Al Busaidi

The piece of the wood is progressively trimmed to the correct size and shape (see Figure 218). Note the use of hands and feet as clamps in (see Figure 219).



Figure 218 Chopping the rough cut towards the final outline using a chisel © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 219 The trimming of the wooden scabbard core to a particular shape © Khalid Al Busaidi

The centreline of the edges of the scabbard core is marked by pencil to prepare it for being cut into two pieces (see Figure 220).



Figure 220 The centreline marking of the scabbard to cut into two pieces © Khalid Al Busaidi

The scabbard core is mounted in a vice and cut using a handsaw (see Figure 221) into two symmetrical pieces (see Figure 222).



Figure 221 Cutting the scabbard into two pieces using a handsaw © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 222 Two symmetrical halves of the scabbard ready for carving space for blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

The appropriate cavity is carved inside each piece (*shahaf*) to hold the blade (see Figure 223).



Figure 223 Carving of the blade cavity in one of the sides of the scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

Both of the pieces are carved similarly to make a symmetric space for the blade (see Figure 224).



Figure 224 Space for the blade between the two pieces of scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

Once the cavity has been cut satisfactorily, the two halves of the scabbard core are glued together (see Figure 225). They are clamped or tied together with string for half a day for the glue to set fully.



Figure 225 Glueing of the scabbard core together © Khalid Al Busaidi

Once the glue has set, the outside of the scabbard core is trimmed using a chisel (see Figure 226) to its final rough form (see Figure 227).



Figure 226 Trimming of a scabbard core with a chisel © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 227 A scabbard core in final rough form © Khalid Al Busaidi

The rough flat sided form of the scabbard core after being chiselled to shape is smoothed into its final curved form using a steel rasp (*misha*), files and abrasive paper (see Figure 228).



Figure 228 Smoothing of a scabbard core using a rasp © Khalid Al Busaidi

Throughout, the craftsman must ensure the two pieces of wood would appear as if they are in one piece when fixed together. The scabbard core's exterior size and shape must be corrected as it is necessary for it to match with the handle, leather work and silverwork later. In addition, the interior cavity must match the size of the blade, to ensure putting the blade in and pulling it out becomes a very smooth process.

The craftsman makes final checks on the scabbard core shape using the leather pattern (see Figure 229) before proceeding.



Figure 229 Checking the size and shape of a scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

The next figure shows a completed scabbard core (see Figure 230).



Figure 230 A completed scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating the leather scabbard cover (qita'a)

The scabbard cover is the largest visual element of the khanjar. It is fitted over the scabbard core and has the same curved shape like a crescent. Making the scabbard cover takes time and effort to create the final aesthetic form of the khanjar. The scabbard cover has variety of decorative elements and these matches with the decorative elements on the khanjar belt. All khanjars are decorated with Omani visual elements that distinguish each type of khanjar (see Figure 231, 232, 233, and 234).



Figure 231 Al Saida khanjar scabbard © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 232 Decoration typical of Al Nizwani, Al Batini and Al Suri khanjar scabbards © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 233 Al Suri khanjar scabbard © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 234 Alternative Al Saida khanjar scabbard © Khalid Al Busaidi

The steps for making the scabbard cover in *Al Nizwani*, *Al Batini* and *Al Suri* khanjar are as follows

After choosing a suitable flexible piece of sheep leather, the shape of the khanjar scabbard core is drawn on the leather (see Figure 235) and additional material is left outside the drawn boundaries of the shape to link the leather piece together with the lining, in the final steps of making the scabbard cover.



Figure 235 Marking the shape of a scabbard core using an additional material © Khalid Al Busaidi

The leather is cut using scissors (see Figure 236).



Figure 236 Cutting of a scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

The details of the design for the scabbard cover are first drawn by the craftsman onto paper (see Figure 237). They typically follow classic Omani inscriptions and designs. They are then transferred from the paper to the leather piece.



Figure 237 Marking the designs for the scabbard cover on a paper. © Khalid Al Busaidi

Once the outlines of the decorative designs have been transferred onto the leather for the scabbard cover in pen, they stitched over using silver wires in a variety of thicknesses (see Figure 238 and 239).



Figure 238 Starts sewing a scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 239 Sewing completed on a scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

There are different types of wires and threads used in sewing the inscriptions and designs drawn on the leather scabbard cover (see Figure 240 and 241):

- Thick silver wires: used to sew the external drawn inscriptions (the boundaries of the patterns).
- Thin silver wires: used to sew the internal details of the patterns.

- Silver and gold threads (can be nylon or other fibre)



Figure 240 Scabbard covers sewn with nylon (left) and silver wire (right) © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 241 Scabbard cover with gold thread (synthetic fibre) © Khalid Al Busaidi

The leather scabbard cover is attached to the front of the scabbard core using glue (see Figure 242 and 243).



Figure 242 Starting glueing the scabbard cover to the scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 243 Scabbard core front covered in glue © Khalid Al Busaidi

Press the scabbard cover (piece of leather that has been previously engraved with silver wires) into the glue on the scabbard core and smoothen into a place (see Figure 244).



Figure 244 Glueing the decorated leather scabbard with the front cover in place © Khalid Al Busaidi

The Back of the scabbard cover (*bitan*) is made of high quality brushed cloth. It covers the back side of the scabbard core parallel to it and sewn onto the leather scabbard cover.

The back of the scabbard cover is cut in to sizes and glued in a similar way to the back of the scabbard cover. It is then sewn to the front leather scabbard cover piece around their edges using thick silver wires (see Figure 245). This process is locally called *zami* and completes the process of forming the scabbard cover.



Figure 245 Sewing the front and back of the scabbard covers with silver wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

In some cases, the back of the strap that attaches the belt is attached to the scabbard core before the back scabbard cover is fitted (see Figure 246).



Figure 246 Back of the scabbard cover fitted over the back belt attachment © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating the silver scabbard upper cover (sader), ferrule (tooq), and chape (qoba'a)

Silver is used in making the three following parts: scabbard upper cover, ferrule, and chape. Each is made from a single piece of silver.

The process starts by the craftsperson collecting an appropriate pile of small new pieces of silver in to a crucible or leftover the silver pieces used in making other parts of a khanjar. They are cut into small pieces to enable them to melt more easily (see Figure 247).



Figure 247 Silver scraps in crucible © Khalid Al Busaidi

Flux powder is sprinkled on the silver scraps to facilitate them to melt. The silver is heated in a pottery crucible and melted with a gas blowtorch (see Figure 248). Put the piece of silver in a special container to melt it by using a blowtorch.



Figure 248 Melting process of silver © Khalid Al Busaidi

When the silver is molten, the crucible is lifted with long handled tongs and the silver poured into a steel or graphite mould (see Figure 249) to create a standard section of silver billet (see Figure 250). This also indicates exactly how much silver is used in the khanjar.



Figure 249 Pouring silver into the standard mould to make a billet © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 250 A small billet of silver © Khalid Al Busaidi

The silver billet is cooled by putting the mould and silver into water. Traditionally, khanjar craftspeople flattened the billet of silver into thin sheets by heating it and beating it on a small anvil (see Figure 251). to facilitate engraving and for it to be easily folded.



Figure 251 Planning to make the silver sheet thinner © Khalid Al Busaidi

More recently, khanjar makers work the silver billet into thinner sections by inserting it between pressure reels in a similar way to that used by the blacksmith making the khanjar blades (see Figure 252).



Figure 252 Rolling the silver to make thinner sheets © Khalid Al Busaidi

The silver can be rolled or hammered to a thin sheet or into three pieces using snips (see Figure 253) for the scabbard upper cover, ferrule, and chape .



Figure 253 Cutting of the silver sheet © Khalid Al Busaidi

The scabbard upper cover and ferrule form a pair and are decorated similarly. The ferrule is the lowest part of the handle and the scabbard upper cover is the upper part of the scabbard. Both are engraved or embossed with Omani designs (see Figure 254 and 255).



Figure 254 Ferrule on Al Saidi khanjar (in this case in gold) © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 255 Upper scabbard cover (as most common in silver) on Al Nizwani khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The manufacturing and craft processes of the ferrule and the upper scabbard cover are almost identical. The process for the upper scabbard cover is described below.

For the scabbard upper cover, a rectangular silver piece is bent into a flattened tube shape to match the scabbard (see Figure 256).



Figure 256 Silver strip in flattened tube for upper scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

The two edges of the strip are silver soldered together using a gas torch. This joint will be at the back of the scabbard (see Figure 257).



Figure 257 Silver soldering process of the edges of the back of the upper scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

The formed silver piece is pushed onto a tapered hardwood that has the standard profiles for khanjar scabbards. The silver piece is lightly tapped to a particular shape and size. By dressing (hammering) more firmly the silver (usually on what will be at the back of the scabbard upper cover) can be increased in size. It is by turns hammered and then tapped sideways until its size and shape matches that desired for the scabbard (see Figure 258).



Figure 258 Forming of the scabbard upper cover to an appropriate size and shape on a former © Khalid Al Busaidi

Similarly, a ring to reinforce the upper edge of the scabbard cover is made and carefully tapped along the hardwood former using a flexible plastic ruler, so it will not bend or spilt, until it is stretched to the required measurement (see Figure 259).



Figure 259 Adjusting the size and shape of a silver ring using a hardwood former © Khalid Al Busaidi

The above silver pieces are tested against the scabbard to which they will fit and final adjustments made as necessary to ensure a snug fit.

The upper scabbard cover and its reinforcing ring are soldered together, cleaned and polished.

The decoration of scabbard upper covers (with matching ferrule and chape) is undertaken in two different ways:

- By embossing and engraving.
- By addition of decorative elements in wire soldered to the surface.

Decoration by embossing and engraving (Al Qala'a)

Then molten lead, melted as described earlier for solder, is poured on to the scabbard upper cover. The lead melts at a lower temperature than the silver solder, used for assembling the khanjar pieces and so does not disturb them. The lead forms a firm and semi-malleable support for the interior surface of the scabbard upper cover (see Figure 260). It helps avoid the upper cover being crushed while decorations are embossed on to it.



Figure 260 Silver scabbard upper cover filled with lead and ready for embossing © Khalid Al Busaidi

Once the empty space in the middle of the scabbard upper cover (or ferrule) has been filled with molten lead and allowed to cool, it is ready for engraving and embossing.

First, it is necessary to make the scabbard cover more manageable to hold in ways that will protect its surface. This is done by partially embedding it in a layer of resin or tar in a hollow on a flat-sided wooden holder. The resin or tar is heated until liquid and the scabbard upper cover pressed on to it and left to cool (see Figure 261). The tar or resin melts at a lower temperature than the lead.



Figure 261 Holding pieces for embossing and engraving © Khalid Al Busaidi

World-wide, a variety of resin and tar-like substances are used for holding pieces for embossing. One common source is the tar used for road surfacing. The only real requirement is the material must melt when heated and when it becomes cool, should have the properties of adhesion, flexibility and

stiffness. These can be adjusted by adding inert filler such as flour to the resin or tar.

The scabbard upper cover or ferrule is now ready for embossing and engraving. Embossing is more common and involves shaping the surface into patterns by hammering background parts of a design to lower their level. This leaves the intended decorations standing forward in relief. In contrast, engraving is done by scratching or hammering the design into the surface. Both are done using a large number of small steel tools made by the craftsman with a wide variety of tips of different shapes and sizes (see Figure 262). These are locally known as *naqsh al qala'a*.



Figure 262 Smallest embossing and engraving tools © Khalid Al Busaidi

Embossing and engraving of the parts of the khanjar are done by lightly tapping the above steel tools onto the surface to do decorations drawn from Omani culture (see Figure 263).



Figure 263 Embossing and engraving using small steel tools © Khalid Al Busaidi

The decorations on the back of the scabbard upper cover or ferrule are done by melting the resin or tar, and turning the piece so that the other face is exposed.

After completing the embossing and engraving, the Khanjar makers melt out the lead that has filled the empty space. This lead is saved and reused.

Recently, some khanjar makers have started to use an electric engraving pen to engrave parts of the khanjar. This is not common at present.

After embossing, it is necessary to clean off the resin or tar deposits. This is done by putting the pieces into lukewarm soapy water for four to six hours and scrubbing them with a soft brush to remove the impurities (see Figure 264). The parts are then left to dry for around 4 hours.



Figure 264 Cleaning the embossed pieces to remove the traces of the supporting materials © Khalid Al Busaidi

Decoration using wire (Al Tikaseer)

Decoration of the khanjar pieces by soldering silver or gold wire (*seem*) in decorative patterns is known as *Naqsh Al Tikaseer*.

The silver wire itself is decorated by being rolled through pairs of embossing reels (see Figure 265) that range in size based on their diameter. Then, the desired shape of the silver wires comes out from the other side of the reels. As in the past, khanjar craftspeople achieved a similar effect by hammering wires between two flat dies containing the required decorative wire profiles.



Figure 265 Embossing reels for decorative wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

Another decorative effect using wire involves creating small rings. This is achieved by first winding silver wire around a former such as a steel tube (see Figure 266).



Figure 266 Winding silver wire around tube to form spiral rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

Khanjar Makers use silver wires that are locally known as Seem to form the basic. The spiral rings of silver are slid off the tube former and heated to anneal it and make it softer for the later processes of working into other shapes (see Figure 267).



Figure 267 Heating of silver wire to anneal it © Khalid Al Busaidi

Once annealed in a spiral form, the silver rings can be snipped from the spiral and wrapped into a variety of desired shapes that form curved parts of khanjar decorations using snips, pliers and chisels (see Figure 268).



Figure 268 Examples of curved decorative silver wire elements © Khalid Al Busaidi

Larger scale decorative elements can be made by twisting and plaiting decorative wires together. These can then be assembled into larger decorative patterns as shown in the early stages of development of the scabbard ferrule below (see Figure 269).



Figure 269 Plaited and decorated wire elements © Khalid Al Busaidi

The overall decoration can be successively built up in its complexity (see Figure 270).



Figure 270 Adding decorative complexity © Khalid Al Busaidi

When each block of decoration is in place, the khanjar craftsman solders it in place. Typically, this is achieved either by great care and careful manipulation of the heat to avoid unsoldering other elements or using different alloys of silver solder that melts at different temperatures.

The decoration on the ferrule must match and co-complement the decoration on the upper scabbard cover and the khanjar maker makes sure that the two pieces fit together as one (see Figure 271).



Figure 271 Matching scabbard upper cover and ferrule decorated in wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

When the final shape of the scabbard upper cover is confirmed, the closing piece through which the khanjar blade will fit is cut to shape and soldered to the top of the upper scabbard cover.

Combining, embossing, engraving and wire work

Sometimes the different approaches to decoration are combined as shown in (see Figure 272 and 273), which show embossing, engraving and decorative wire work in detail.



Figure 272 Combination of embossing a highly detailed silver wire decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 273 Combination of embossing and wire decoration in Al Saidi khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

After completing the engraving on the scabbard upper cover or ferrule using embossing, engraving and decorative wire arrangements (*al qala'a* and *al tikaseer*), the khanjar makers ensure the accuracy of the measurement of the scabbard upper cover on the scabbard itself (see Figure 274).



Figure 274 Checking the fitness of the scabbard upper cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

Extending upper scabbard cover for wearing a shawl

Some of owners of khanjars request the khanjar Makers to lengthen the area of the scabbard upper cover in order to wear the khanjar with a *shawl*. *Shawl* is a piece of cloth that looks like an Omani turban locally known as *mussar* and it is worn in many occasions. The reason for prolonging that area is to show the scabbard upper cover when a man wraps the *shawl* around it; as wrapping the *shawl* may hide many parts of the khanjar (see Figure 275).



Figure 275 Wrapping a shawl around a Khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

Making the chape

The chape is a smaller silver or gold piece that covers the tip of the khanjar scabbard. Its roles are to protect the tip of the scabbard and to add the aesthetic appearance of the khanjar. The front of the chape is decorated using embossing, engraving and decorative wire and the back is relatively plain (see Figure 276).



Figure 276 Front and back sides of a silver chape © Khalid Al Busaidi

To make a chape, the khanjar craftsperson takes pieces of silver sheet and progressively rounds them by hammering them over small steel shapes, in smithing terms known as hardies (see Figure 277).



Figure 277 Small steel hardies used for hammering the chape to shape © Khalid Al Busaidi

The chape pieces are fitted to a standard hardwood pattern that is the same size and shape of the scabbard (see Figure 278). These wooden patterns come in different sizes to match the different sizes and shapes of scabbard.



Figure 278 Hardwood standard former for chape shown fitted with a fully completed chape © Khalid Al Busaidi

After ensuring their appropriate measurement, a front piece is soldered to a back piece of chape and they are prepared for decoration.

The chape passes through similar steps and stages of decoration as the scabbard upper cover and ferrule with *Al Qala'a* or *Al Tikaseer* decorations to match the scabbard upper cover and ferrule. Instead of being filled with lead, however, for embossing, the chape is filled with the same resin or tar as it is bound in to hold it (see Figure 279).



Figure 279 Chapes in holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

Embossed chapes are cleaned in the same way ready for fitting to the scabbard (see Figure 280).



Figure 280 Completed and cleaned chape ready for fitting to a scabbard © Khalid Al Busaidi

Typically, the chapes are glued in place. The next figure shows a khanjar maker pressing a chape in place after adding glue to the chape up to the end of the scabbard (see Figure 281).



Figure 281 Fitting a chape © Khalid Al Busaidi

Once fitted, the aim is that the chape should be aesthetically completed for the appearance of the khanjar scabbard as shown in (see Figure 282).



Figure 282 Scabbard with a chape © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating the belt holder (Tems)

The belt holder is a rectangular ribbon made of leather and secures the khanjar scabbard to the waist belt in an articulated way through a chain of ringed connections. The belt holder part on the scabbard is located just below the scabbard upper cover.

The preferred material is thick leather or cowhide (see Figure 283).



Figure 283 Piece of cowhide © Khalid Al Busaidi

The belt holder is attached to the belt via two rings. It needs to be as wide as possible fit on those rings for maximum strength and good aesthetics. The khanjar makers measure the size with the help of a belt holder on the rings using a pair of dividers locally known as *firgar* (see Figure 284).



Figure 284 Using dividers to measure the maximum width of the belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

The dividers are used to transfer this measurement onto the leather to mark out the leather strip to be used for the belt holder (see Figure 285).



Figure 285 Marking the width of the belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

Each belt holder consists of two identical strips of approximately 30 cm each cut from the cow hide using scissors (see Figure 286).



Figure 286 Cutting the leather © Khalid Al Busaidi

The first strip is used to provide support around the attachment ring often with a conical head locally known as *Amama* or *Ters* (see Figure 287).



Figure 287 Attachment ring (ters or amama) © Khalid Al Busaidi

One side of the strip is covered with glue (see Figure 288).



Figure 288 Gluing the strip © Khalid Al Busaidi

The strip is wrapped tightly around the side of the silver ring without decoration (see Figure 289) and the end trimmed tidily.



Figure 289 Glueing and rolling the strip © Khalid Al Busaidi

The completed leather bound ring can be seen in next figure alongside a bare ring showing the decoration only on one side (see Figure 290).



Figure 290 Ring with conical head with and without the leather strip © Khalid Al Busaidi

The second strip is wrapped around the second ring in the same way following the same steps (see Figure 291).



Figure 291 Two rings with conical head with leather strips © Khalid Al Busaidi

Another strip of leather of the same width is cut with a length approximately 180-220 cm as shown (see Figure 292 and 293).



Figure 292 Cutting leather strip © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 293 Length of a leather strip © Khalid Al Busaidi

The new strip is wrapped around the scabbard and looped round the two previously prepared rings on both sides of the scabbard in order to take the initial measurement of one loop of this leather strip (see Figure 294).



Figure 294 Measuring the length of the loop around the scabbard and the rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

Once this initial loop is measured, the strip is fixed by glueing the leather ends together (see Figure 295).



Figure 295 Initial loop glued © Khalid Al Busaidi

The remainder of the strip is glued and wrapped in place around the initial loop (see Figure 296).



Figure 296 Freshly glued multiple loops © Khalid Al Busaidi

To ensure the leather is tightly glued it is first clamped tightly in a small vice for approximately one hour (see Figure 297).



Figure 297 Clamping the glued belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

Before removing from the vice, the belt holder is tightly lashed close to the rings as shown (see Figure 298).



Figure 298 Lashing the ends of the belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

The middle of the belt holder, which has not been glued, is opened up and the scabbard is slid up into the belt holder (see Figure 299).



Figure 299 Scabbard slid into belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

A small hole is made between the scabbard and the side rings (see Figure 300), to install two other rings (see Figure 301) that attach the belt holder to the scabbard using long rivets.



Figure 300 Making holes for attaching the belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 301 Attachment of rings with long rivets © Khalid Al Busaidi

A silver covering decoration is added to the leather belt holder strap and glued in place (see Figure 302).



Figure 302 A silver strip for a belt holder and other parts © Khalid Al Busaidi

Two rings with rivets as attached by inserting the rivets through the two holes made earlier (see Figure 303) and inside the two holes made before, and folded at the back to attach them from the back with a flexible wire.



Figure 303 Inserting the rivets by attaching the rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

The khanjar craftsman fixes the two rings in place with the rivets and then begins lashing the whole of the arrangement and scabbard together using decorative silver wire (see Figure 304).



Figure 304 Starts lashing the belt holder to the scabbard © Khalid Al Busaidi

The twisted decorative silver wires locally known as *seem* are lashed between and through the two inner rings and the back side of the khanjar. The process is repeated several times to make sure that the two rings will not move and also to give the belt holder aesthetic touches that complete the other aesthetic touches in the Omani khanjar (see Figure 305).



Figure 305 Belt holder lashed to khanjar scabbard with silver wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating silver rings (halqat)

Silver rings are installed on the belt holder and other areas of khanjar scabbards. Most Omani khanjars have four rings but the *Al Saidi* khanjar Type I and II have seven rings. The rings come in three different forms: normal ring (often asymmetrical), ring with conical head, and twisted ring (see Figure 306, 307, and 308).



Figure 306 Normal ring - note asymmetry © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 307 Ring with conical head © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 308 Twisted ring © Khalid Al Busaidi

In special cases, the rings may also be made of gold.

The main approach for creating silver rings is as follows. First the silver with flux is melted in a crucible as before using a gas torch (see Figure 309).



Figure 309 Melting process of the silver © Khalid Al Busaidi

The molten silver is then poured into moulds to create long flat sided strips. After removing from the moulds, the silver strips are then annealed by being heated (see Figure 310).



Figure 310 Annealing of the steel strips © Khalid Al Busaidi

The strips are hammered along their length on a small anvil to achieve the correct form (see Figure 311).



Figure 311 Forming of the strips for rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

A length of silver strip is wrapped around a standard sized steel cylinder (see Figure 312) and hammered gently into the required ring (see Figure 313).



Figure 312 Wrapping of silver around a steel former © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 313 Hammering process of the ring to a particular shape © Khalid Al Busaidi

The ends of the ring are soldered together (see Figure 314) and the joint is filed smooth (see Figure 315).



Figure 314 Soldering the ends of a ring © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 315 Filing the joint smooth © Khalid Al Busaidi

The conical headed ring comprises a standard ring created as above with additional steps. A silver wire is wrapped in a circular motion around a small steel cone, which is commensurate with the ring, from the top to the base until it is fully covered and the conical head shape is formed. The tool in **Error! Reference source not found.** is used in this process (see Figure 316).



Figure 316 Tool used in making conical shaped rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

The cone of silver wire is then soldered together into a single mass. These cones of silver wire are then soldered to the rings (see Figure 317).



Figure 317 Soldering the conical heads to the rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

When soldered the rings are put into water to cool them (see Figure 318) and dissolve any flux (see Figure 319).



Figure 318 Placing of newly soldered rings in water © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 319 Final appearance of a newly soldered conical head ring © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating twisted silver wire (seem)

The twisted silver wires used for lashing the belt holder are made by manually twisting wire. First a length of plain silver wire around 2 metres long is bent into two equal halves and the ends are attached to a nail fixed into a wall. The loop is attached to another loop in a rotary hand drill. The drill is rotated and the wire is twisted to the preferred tightness (see Figure 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, and 325).



Figure 320 Fastening the silver wire to the wall © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 321 Attaching a wire to the hand drill © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 322 Starting twisting the wire © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 323 Choosing the wire tension © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 324 Finished sample of twisted wire © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 325 Twisted silver wire in belt holder © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating wire of different thicknesses

The silver wire available locally varies in thickness. The khanjar makers also require wires in different thicknesses. Khanjar makers can reduce the diameter of wires using dies, locally known as *mintal* (see Figure 326).



Figure 326 Handmade drawing dies for reducing the thicknesses of wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating the belt (hezaq)

The belt consists of two separate pieces of leather with one piece longer than the other. Beautiful designs of silver wires sometimes mixed with golden wires are sewn on the belt.

Creating the belt is started by cutting two rectangular pieces of leather with one piece longer than the other (see Figure 327).



Figure 327 Pieces of a belt marked for decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi

The guidelines for the decoration patterns are marked on the belt pieces with a pencil (see Figure 328).



Figure 328 Marking decorations on the belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

The decorations are created by being sewn onto the belt in silver wire (thick or thin) or golden nylon yarn over the pre-drawn markings (see Figure 329).



Figure 329 Sewing of the decoration in silver thread © Khalid Al Busaidi

The back (inner) side of the belt is lined with a quality brushed fabric fixed in place with glue. The edges of the belt and the fabric liner are sewn overhand in silver wire in a process locally known as *Al Zami* (see Figure 330).



Figure 330 Edge of belt sewn overhand with silver wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

The short length of the belt has a buckle on one end attached by a loop, and on the other a loop for attaching the short belt to a ring on the belt holder on the scabbard (see Figure 331). These loops on either end of the belt comprise short strips of leather, typically covered in silver and attached using a silver

stud with an attached rivet. The rivet has two legs that are inserted through all the pieces and bent round to fix everything in place.



Figure 331 Belt section with buckle, attachment straps and stud © Khalid Al Busaidi

The back of the attachment can be seen in (see Figure 332).



Figure 332 Back of a stud attachment © Khalid Al Busaidi

The longest part of the belt has a loop on one end for attachment to the belt holder on the scabbard and on the other end is attached a short undecorated leather strap, the baldric, with holes for adjusting the belt (see Figure 333).



Figure 333 Sort plain adjusting strap attached to a long belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

A completed new decorated khanjar belt (sans baldric) (see Figure 334).



Figure 334 A completed belt sans baldric © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating the belt buckle (bazeem)

The belt buckle is a cast silver piece with precise designs that is attached to the short part of the belt.

The mould for casting the silver belt buckle is made of a large piece of cuttlefish bone. The piece of cuttlefish bone is first cut into two halves (see Figure 335).



Figure 335 Cuttlefish bone cut into two matching parts © Khalid Al Busaidi

The shape of the buckle is drawn on the first half of the bone in pencil (see Figure 336). The outline is then filled in with wet ink and transferred exactly to the other piece by placing both together.



Figure 336 Drawing of an outline in pencil © Khalid Al Busaidi

The shape of the buckle is engraved into the two pieces of soft cuttlefish bone using a sharp implement or even a sharpened pencil (see Figure 337).



Figure 337 Engraving the shape of the buckle in both halves © Khalid Al Busaidi

The two matching pieces of cuttlefish are carefully placed together and tied with wire. A small hole is made on the top of the two parts into the casting void and molten silver is poured from a crucible into the hole until it fills the mould (see Figure 338).



Figure 338 Pouring of the silver buckle © Khalid Al Busaidi

After five to ten minutes, the molten silver becomes cold and solid and the mould is opened to retrieve the silver belt buckle with its decorations as carved into the mould (see Figure 339).



Figure 339 Removing the buckle from the mould © Khalid Al Busaidi

The 'as cast' buckle is smoothed and trimmed. Decorations on the front side of the belt buckle are enhanced and added to and as tongue is folded into the centre made of silver strip (see Figure 340).



Figure 340 A completed belt buckle © Khalid Al Busaidi

Creating studs (razah)

Studs are decorated circular silver pieces similar to clothing buttons. They are attached with two thick wires that are passed through the fabric or leather and have their ends folded from the back side. Studs are used on both of the unequal sides of the belt (see Figure 341).



Figure 341 Studs used in attaching straps to end of the short belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

To make studs (*razah*) first cut circular pieces of silver (see Figure 342). Their size and thickness depend on the load and on the decoration.



Figure 342 Silver discs for making studs © Khalid Al Busaidi

These circular silver pieces are placed on a decorative steel or copper stamp with inscriptions locally known as *taba'a* (see Figure 343) and hammered until the silver shows the inscription clearly and takes the shape cut into the stamp.



Figure 343 Stamp for making decorative inscriptions on silver © Khalid Al Busaidi

Two long silver attachment strips are soldered to the back of the stud (see Figure 344).



Figure 344 Studs with attachment strip rivets © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools and machinery used in the manufacture of the Omani khanjar

Omani khanjar makers use a variety of hand tools and small powered machinery in different stages of khanjar making. Some tools are highly specific in their role, e.g. tools for drawing gold and silver rods into fine wire. Other tools are used more generally in the manufacture of several parts of the khanjar. Tools used by the khanjar makers will be reviewed with reference to the different parts of the khanjar rather than vice versa.

Tools used to create khanjar handles

The handles of khanjar are sculpted from a variety of different materials ranging from wood to ivory (now not readily available due to the international laws).

The craft manufacturing process in each case is similar. The material for the handle, and the handle shape and size is chosen by the prospective khanjar owners, usually from a range of existing styles each with a pattern piece already made. The shape of the handle is marked out using a pencil, marker or scribe by drawing round the pattern on a piece of the chosen handle material. This is then held in a vice and cut out using a saw. After it is sculpted to its 3 dimensional curved shape using chisels and rasps, and brought to a smooth finish using a combination of power sander, motorised grinder, sanding block and sandpaper.

Some khanjar handles are decorated using silver or gold pins hammered into small holes in places located using a predrilled metal pattern. The holes for the pins are drilled using a hand drill or, nowadays, a small battery-powered drill.

Some handles are decorated using silver or gold bosses cast in a steel mould. Some handles are partially covered with silver or gold sheet. Some more recent handles made of moulded plastic have the handle decoration cast into the handle as it is produced. This latter usually occurs before the khanjar makers receive the handle.

Pen, marker, pencil or scribe to mark the handle shape

An ink pen, marker, pencil, or sometimes a scribe, is used to draw the shape required to cut the handle on the chosen material, which may be wood, different variety of animal horns, or plastic. The next figure shows a pattern piece being used to mark the outline of the handle on a timber khanjar handle (see Figure 345).



Figure 345 Use of a pen to mark out the shape of a khanjar handle © Khalid Al Busaidi

Handle pattern

This pattern is typically made of steel and is one of the different sizes and shapes used by each khanjar makers. The pattern is used to ensure the length, width and shape of the khanjar as decided. For some types of khanjars, such as the *Al Nizwani* khanjar, and those with similar handles, the silver insert piece or the steel pattern for it is used as the pattern for drawing the handle shape.

The next figure shows a handle pattern piece in the *Al Nizwani* style being held against a piece of timber (see Figure 346).



Figure 346 Khanjar handle pattern piece © Khalid Al Busaidi

Portable Bench Vice

For convenience, khanjar makers use vices that are semi-portable. The vices are used to firmly hold components whilst working on them. In the case of the handle, the vice is used to hold the wooden sample for the handle whilst sawing and rasping it to shape. The figure below shows a 4" machine vice mounted onto a small but heavy piece of timber. The timber also protects the floor surfaces (see Figure 347).



Figure 347 Portable machine vice © Khalid Al Busaidi

Handsaws

Different types of handsaws are used to cut out the khanjar handle. One widely used saw is a hacksaw frame fitted with a double sided blade with hardened teeth shaped for cutting wood or plastic with a coarse tooth pitch of around 6 teeth per inch (see Figure 348).



Figure 348 Adjustable tension handsaw with coarse tooth blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

Other saws include conventional short cross cut saw (see Figure 349) and variants on cross cut compass saw and tree pruning saws (see Figure 350). The

main difference between the compass saw and the tree pruning saw is with the offset handle. We can notice the presence of an offset handle in a pruning saw.



Figure 349 Short cross-cut panel saw © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 350 Tree pruning saw © Khalid Al Busaidi

All of these saws are used in removing excess material from the khanjar handle ready for it to be brought into its final shape using rasps, files, grinders and abrasive paper.

Rasps and files

When the khanjar handle forms approximately the correct shape, the final shaping is undertaken with rasps and files, depending on the material. Both comprise a steel bar of flat or rounded cross section with small teeth to cut away material as the file or rasp is pushed across a surface. The teeth of files and rasps are different. Files have surfaces comprising lines of straight chisel shapes and are mainly used for shaping metals and plastics. Rasps in contrast are intended for wood and fibrous material. The surfaces of rasps consist of rows of individual teeth similar to shark teeth that can cut the surface.

Rasps and files are typically used to do the final shaping of the khanjar handle. The crafts person can demonstrate the use of a file or rasp on a rough cut sample, rather than on almost a completed khanjar handle (see Figure 351). At the lower edge of the picture is an example of the types of shapes that can be achieved.



Figure 351 Use of rasps and files © Khalid Al Busaidi

Rotary sanding machines

Once the khanjar handle is close to the final shape it is further shaped by rotary sanding, which also helps to obtain a smoother finish. The initial stage of this sanding process is undertaken using rotary roll and face sanders. Typically, the sanding surfaces are glued in place on a relatively compliant surface, often made of rubber or synthetic foam. Some rotary sanding machines have multiple abrasive surfaces as in the machine shown (see Figure 352). They have two sanding rollers of different diameters and one rotary flat sanding face. The abrasives are typically consisting of aluminium oxide. Some smaller rotary sanding arrangements are mounted in a portable electric drill.



Figure 352 Rotary sanding machine with two sanding rolls and a face sanding disk © Khalid Al Busaidi

Rotary grinding machine

Khanjar makers use abrasive materials and tools in a flexible manner. For more precise grinding or for tougher or harder khanjar handle materials such as bone, plastic or marble handles, the khanjar makers may use a small 3-9” grinding wheel. In some cases, like the version in the image below (see Figure

353) these are fitted to a shaft mounted on trunnion bearings and driven by belt from an electric motor. This would in other circumstances be more commonly used for grinding metals.



Figure 353 Grinding of a wheel © Khalid Al Busaidi

Abrasive blocks and abrasive paper

For the final finishing of khanjar handles, khanjar makers also use a variety of hand held abrasives including sanding blocks with various grades of abrasive grit and abrasive paper. The most common abrasive used is aluminium oxide. Again, khanjar makers use abrasives in a flexible manner. For example, the abrasive block of carborundum or silicon carbide shown (see Figure 354) may be used on wood or plastic although it would more normally be used on hard metals.



Figure 354 A silicon carbide abrasive block with different grits on upper and lower faces © Khalid Al Busaidi

Hammers

Hammers are made for a variety of specialist purposes. Khanjar makers use a variety of hammers. They are however relatively flexible about their choice of hammer for particular tasks. Some general purpose hammers such as the one shown (see Figure 355) get used for a wide variety of purposes.



Figure 355 A widely used general purposes hammer © Khalid Al Busaidi

Pattern for pin decoration

Some khanjar handles are decorated using silver or gold pins hammered into their surface following traditional decorative elements. To reduce the time and effort in setting out these patterns and inserting the pins, khanjar makers use prepared standard metal patterns with predrilled holes. This enables them to quickly and accurately pre-mark the decorations on khanjar handles by dusting chalk through the holes in the metal patterns (see Figure 356). The silver or gold pins are then either driven directly into the handle or interference fit holes are drilled or poked into the handle material and the pins tapped into them and the excess ground off using a grinding wheel as in (see Figure 353).



Figure 356 Khanjar handle pin pattern and khanjar handle with pin decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi

Metal Moulds for casting handle bosses

Many types of khanjar such as the *Al Saidi* and *Al Sifani* khanjars are decorated with silver or gold decorative bosses (see Figure 357).



Figure 357 Khanjar handles decorated by gold and silver bosses and embossed plates © Khalid Al Busaidi

These gold and silver decorations are cast using small metal molds in a variety of different sizes and shapes. An example is shown (see Figure 358).



Figure 358 Small metal mould for casting silver or gold bosses © Khalid Al Busaidi

Battery-powered drill

The installation of pins and bosses and the blade itself require holes being drilled into the handle. In earlier times, this would have been achieved using small hand-made drill bits in a hand powered drill. More recently, khanjar makers have begun using conventional machine drill bits and battery-powered drills as shown (see Figure 359).



Figure 359 Drill bit in battery-powered drill © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools used in making khanjar blades

Khanjar blades are currently forged from alloy steel similar to SAE grade 5160 spring steel. This latter spring steel and similar steels are widely used by knife smiths and sword smiths worldwide because the material is readily and economically available as the leaf springs from trucks. Suitable length sections of this alloy steel are cut to length using a hacksaw or angle grinder, heated to yellow heat and hand forged or rolled to the required shape. As described earlier, for khanjar blades, the steel sections are repeatedly reheated and rolled between roll formers under high pressure whilst hot to thin the blade and create the central spine.

The section of blade is then reheated to yellow heat and bent using a former and a sledge hammer. After bending the outline of the blade is cut to shape and ground to a knife blade profile. The blade is finally formed and sanded to a visually attractive appearance and sharpened as appropriate.

Furnace (tan'nur)

The furnaces used by khanjar blacksmiths are relatively conventional waste oil forced air furnaces (see Figure 360). The exterior of the furnace is concrete block and brick with the furnace opening braced by a steel frame. Typically for this kind of furnace there is a gravity feed of oil or diesel into a combustion chamber with air fed by a fan. These kinds of furnace need preheating with wood or similar to reach the temperature at which the oil or diesel will sustain its burning. Typically, the flame is directed into a chamber insulated using vermiculate, fire bricks or similar.



Figure 360 Tongs inserting steel piece into drip oil furnace with fan forced air supply off © Khalid Al Busaidi

Long tongs

The long tongs comprise elongated pliers with long arms and short jaws pivoting round a bolt or rivet and used for picking up and holding things (see Figure 360). The khanjar makers use it for picking up a piece of steel and putting it into a hot oven and taking it out several times in order to form the blade.

Roll forging machine

The sample of steel that will become the khanjar blade is first heated to yellow heat and then rolled between the reels of a roll forging machine in which the rollers are shaped with grooves to form the spine of the khanjar and thin the blade sides (see Figure 361). The rollers are electrically driven and the distance between them can be adjusted. The blade is passed multiple times through the rollers until cooled and is then reheated.



Figure 361 Upper roll of electrically powered small roll forging machine © Khalid Al Busaidi

Forging tool for bending khanjar blade

Once the blade sections have been rolled to create the spines and reduce the blade thickness, they are bent to shape. This bending is achieved by clamping the heated unbent blade in a forging jig mounted on a heavy steel base. This blade bending jig has the correct curved form. A portable hand-held former also shaped to the correct curve is placed over the other edge of the blade and struck with sledge hammer to bend the khanjar blade into its traditional curved shape in which the point is at a 30 degree angle to the main direction of the blade. The blade is heated and reheated as necessary to facilitate the process. The upper and lower parts of the khanjar blade bending tool are shown (see Figure 362).



Figure 362 Khanjar blade bending tool, upper and lower parts © Khalid Al Busaidi

Sledgehammer

The sledgehammer is a long handled hammer with heavy head used particularly with the blade bending tool, in which the top piece is hammered to bend the hot blade (see Figure 363).



Figure 363 Sledgehammer © Khalid Al Busaidi

Anvil

Anvils are fundamentally hard heavy surfaces against which to hammer metal to shape it. Traditional anvils have areas of different hardness, a flat section and a softer horn and a variety of cut outs to hold particular metal working tools. Whilst traditional anvils are available in Oman, many khanjar makers use large pieces of cast or forged steel instead. (see Figure 364) is an example.



Figure 364 Steel section used as an anvil © Khalid Al Busaidi

Cat-head hammer

This is a medium-sized hammer with a flat head, often used against the anvil to flatten and shape the blade as required (see Figure 365).



Figure 365 Cat head hammer © Khalid Al Busaidi

Shovel

The shovel is a tool resembling a spade with a broad blade and typically upturned sides (see Figure 366). The khanjar makers use a shovel to remove ash and wood from the furnace after burning wood to pre-heat the furnace prior to the burning of oil to heat steel.



Figure 366 Shovel © Khalid Al Busaidi

Khanjar blade pattern

After the khanjar blade has been bent and flattened, its shape is marked against a standard template pattern (see Figure 367). Each khanjar makers use several different standard steel patterns to mark out blades for cutting to shape. There are different measurements recognised by the Khanjar makers, from small to large.



Figure 367 Khanjar standard blade pattern © Khalid Al Busaidi

Blade clamp

Khanjar makers use a special blade clamp that clamps the blade horizontally (see Figure 368). The handle used to tighten the clamp is located below it to provide improved access for the angle grinder. This clamp is used to hold the blade both to cut the marked edges of the blade and to sharpen the blade.



Figure 368 Blade clamp © Khalid Al Busaidi

Electric angle grinder

An electric angle grinder (see Figure 369) is used with steel cutting and grinding discs to cut the Khanjar blade to shape and size.



Figure 369 Electric angle grinder © Khalid Al Busaidi

Electric bench-mounted grinding wheel

A grinding wheel (described earlier) is used to sharpen the blade for grinding away the blemishes and to make the blade to a consistent bright finish (see Figure 370).



Figure 370 An electric bench-mounted grinding wheel © Khalid Al Busaidi

Small rotary sanding machine

Khanjar makers also use small electrically powered rotary sanding machines to polish the blade using finer abrasive papers. These sanding machines typically have abrasive sheets bonded to compliant substrates such as rubber or polyurethane to provide a smooth finish and avoid leaving grinding marks (see Figure 371).



Figure 371 Small electrically powered rotary sanding machine © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools used in making the scabbard

The khanjar scabbard comprises a wooden core with a leather surface decorated with various styles of silver and gold decoration. The wooden scabbard core has the traditional bent shape of the Omani khanjar and is hollow to contain and protect the khanjar blade. For convenience of manufacturer it is made by glueing the front and the back sides together. The construction methods and tools are similar to that of the handle. The shape of the khanjar wooden core is given by one of several leather patterns. These differ depending on the size of the khanjar and its type.

Scabbard pattern

Scabbard patterns are typically made of leather and used to mark out the shape, curvature, length and width of the scabbard for a particular type and size of khanjar (see Figure 372). These scabbard patterns represent several different standard measurements.



Figure 372 Scabbard pattern in leather © Khalid Al Busaidi

Handsaws

One or more different types of handsaw are used to remove the excess material from the scabbard core. One widely used saw is a hacksaw frame fitted with a double sided blade with hardened teeth shaped for cutting wood or plastic with a coarse tooth pitch of around 6 teeth per inch (see Figure 373).



Figure 373 Adjustable tension handsaw with coarse tooth blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

Other saws include conventional short cross cut saw (see Figure 349) and variants on cross cut compass saw and tree pruning saws (see Figure 350). The main difference between the compass saw and the tree pruning saw being the offset handle in the pruning saw.

All of these saws are used in removing excess material from the scabbard core ready for it to be brought into its final shape using chisels, rasps, files, grinders and abrasive paper.

The panel saw is typically used to slice the wooden scabbard core into two mirror halves after the rough shape of the scabbard has been sawn using the other saws.

Chisel

This is a long-bladed hand tool with a bevelled sharp cutting edge and a handle which is struck with a hammer or mallet. The khanjar makers uses the chisel to trim the external profile of the scabbard core, to remove material from both sides of the scabbard to accommodate the khanjar blade, and when the two halves of the scabbard core are glued together, a chisel is used to shape the outside of the scabbard (see Figure 374).



Figure 374 Chisel being used to cut central cavity of side of the khanjar scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

Portable Bench Vice

For convenience, khanjar makers use vices that are semi-portable. The vices are used to firmly hold components whilst working on them. In the case of the scabbard core, the vice is primarily used to hold the wooden sample for the scabbard core whilst sawing it to shape (see Figure 375).



Figure 375 A portable bench vice © Khalid Al Busaidi

Rasps and files

Rasps have individual hooked teeth (see Figure 376), which is different from files, which have teeth like rows of chisels. Rasps are commonly used for shaping wood such as the scabbard core because the teeth in the rasp can cut quickly as they sever wood fibres and allow the intermediate fibre to fall away.



Figure 376 Rasp © Khalid Al Busaidi

Abrasive paper and blocks

Abrasive papers are used for final smoothing of the wooden scabbard core after it has been rasped to shape. Typically, the abrasive papers used by

khanjar makers use aluminium oxide grit. Abrasive papers are fabric reinforced paper with abrasive powders glued to them and are used for smoothing or polishing woodwork or other surfaces of the scabbard (see Figure 370).

Hammer

The khanjar makers uses a hammer (see Figure 377) to tap the chisel into the wood.



Figure 377 Claw hammer © Khalid Al Busaidi

Pencil

Khanjar makers use pencils (see Figure 378), and occasionally pens, as the main means of marking shapes and dimensions on khanjar components.



Figure 378 Pencil with eraser © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools used in making the scabbard cover and belt

The scabbard cover and belt typically require leather working and sewing tools.

Scissors

A pair of medium-sized good quality steel scissors (see Figure 379) are used to cut the pieces of leather for the scabbard or belt components. Scissors are also used for cutting cloth for the lining the back of the scabbard and belt.



Figure 379 Scissors © Khalid Al Busaidi

Rulers

Khanjar makers use a variety of steel, plastic and wood rulers to draw straight lines and measure lengths. The khanjar makers commonly use the rulers to draw the required decorative patterns on the scabbard cover and the belt (see Figure 380).



Figure 380 A steel ruler is being used to draw a pattern on a paper for transferring onto the scabbard cover or belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

Pencil

As above, khanjar makers use pencils (see Figure 378), and pens, as the main means of marking patterns on khanjar components.

Sewing needles and awl

Khanjar makers use sewing needles in various sizes to sew the inscriptions on the scabbard or the belt using wire and yarn strands of different sizes and colours. This is often called a sewing awl. Sewing needles/awls are also used to bind the edges of the cloth lining at the back of the belt and scabbard to the fronts of the same components. The different sizes of needles are kept together in the sewing awl body (see Figure 381).



Figure 381 Sewing needle and case/sewing awl © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools used in making the scabbard upper cover, ferrule and chape

The scabbard upper cover, ferrule and chape involve the use of similar silver and gold smithing technologies and tools.

Crucible

Crucibles are containers for metals which are melted in them. This means that the crucibles must withstand higher temperatures than the metals that are melted in them and must guarantee their structural integrity as breakage when full of molten metal is not acceptable in safety terms.

Typically crucibles are made of ceramic or metal. They come in different sizes depending on the amount of silver or gold to be melted. The insides of crucibles are often pre glazed with borax flux to form a glassy protective lining. Typically, small crucibles will be handled with tongs and have a small pouring lip as shown (see Figure 382).



Figure 382 Crucible with small pieces of silver being heated © Khalid Al Busaidi

Gas torch

The most common source of heat used by khanjar makers in addition to the furnace is propane and butane gas. For silver and gold, the temperature of propane and butane with air is sufficient for melting and soldering (for other metals and higher temperatures it might be necessary to use oxygen rather than air). The heat is most typically applied using a gas torch as shown (see Figure 383).



Figure 383 Gas torch © Khalid Al Busaidi

The gas torch enables the khanjar makers to control the flame temperature and amount of heat for melting metals or soldering them together. The adjustment is done by adjusting the pressure of gas available from the gas bottle, adjusting the gas flow through the torch with the knob on top, and by changing the burner and jet to the left on the figure above. Different sizes of jets and burners are available that can provide large amounts of heat to a crucible or create a tiny flame smaller than that of a pencil point for precision soldering.

LPG gas cylinder, hose and pressure reducer

The gas torch uses liquefied petroleum gas (also called LPG, GPL, LP Gas, liquid petroleum gas, or simply propane or butane) supplied at a reduced pressure through a hose connected between the cylinder and the torch. The pressure reducing valve is located between the hose and the outlet of the gas cylinder as shown (see Figure 384).



Figure 384 Gas cylinder, hose and pressure reducing valve © Khalid Al Busaidi

Graphite and steel moulds for silver and gold

It is in the nature of khanjar production that many scraps of silver or gold need to be recycled back into silver sheet. This is done by melting the silver or gold in a crucible and then pouring the molten metal into the mould shown (see Figure 385) to form a flat billet than can be hammered or rolled into a new thin silver or gold sheet. Typically these moulds are made of steel or dense graphite.



Figure 385 Mould for creating small billets of silver or gold © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tongs

Tongs are tools, like pliers, with two movable arms pivoting around a rivet or bolt that are used for picking up and holding things especially things that are hot (see Figure 386).



Figure 386 Pair of medium length tongs © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tongs are used for holding crucibles to pour silver or gold, to hold the mould or hot billets of silver or gold. Tongs come in different lengths, in part depending on the size of the objects they are intended to hold, and in part on temperature of the object being held. Long tongs provide more distance between the khanjar makers and the hot object.

Hammer

A medium-sized hammer with a flat head (see Figure 377) is mainly used to work the silver or gold as required.

Pressure rolling machine

The pressure rolling machine is used to flatten silver or gold pieces and make them thinner. The machine is electrically powered and the sample is placed between two slowly counter rotating rolls that squeeze the metal sample and make it thinner (see Figure 387). The gap between the rolls can be adjusted as appropriate. The rolls may be rotated by electric motor or by a hand winder depending on the machine.



Figure 387 Piece of silver being fed into pressure rolling machine © Khalid Al Busaidi

Pencil

A pencil (see Figure 378) is used to draw the outlines required to cut the silver or gold to be used for the formation of the scabbard upper cover, ferrule and chape. It is also used in sketches for decorations and patterns for embossing and for formally sketching out the patterns and transfer to the metal ready for punching and engraving the patterns into the metal.

Rulers

Khanjar makers use steel, plastic and wooden rulers to draw the required size of the material for the scabbard upper cover, ferrule and chape and the decorations on paper and then on the metal. Khanjar makers also use rulers (most commonly plastic rulers) as soft lightweight hammers as shown below (see Figure 388).



Figure 388 Using a ruler to tap a silver ring along a tapered former to increase its size © Khalid Al Busaidi

Shears, snips, pliers and pincers

In blacksmithing terms, shears, snips, pliers and grippers are the same tool with the operating blades modified to do different tasks. Khanjar makers use a wide variety of these tools as shown (see Figure 389). These tools are made in a variety of sizes. In the figure, however, they are all medium sized tools. Shears are used to cut thicker material, Snips are more like robust scissors and are used to cut thin silver or gold sheet. Pliers and pincers are used to hold items or sheets so that they can be bent or worked on in some other way.



Figure 389 Pliers, shears, snips and pincers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tweezers

Tweezers are a small instrument for holding or picking up small objects (see Figure 390).



Figure 390 Tweezers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Their characteristic feature is, unlike pliers, they do not use a pivoting mechanism. Instead the two halves are attached together at the end opposite to that which does the gripping and the two arms are sprung apart so they require squeezing onto the object being held. Khanjar makers use tweezers for a wide variety of delicate work such as setting out patterns in silver and gold wire for soldering.

Wooden former for sizing and shaping ferrule and scabbard upper cover

This tapered hardwood former is used both as a measure and a tool for sizing the ferrule and scabbard upper cover. It also acts as the standard reference shape for scabbard cores of different sizes. The former is a long hardwood tapered stick of elliptical cross section (see Figure 391). It holds the shapes for Khanjar cross section at the intersection of the scabbard core with the khanjar blade handle from the smallest to the largest khanjars.



Figure 391 Wooden former for sizing and shaping the ferrule and scabbard upper cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

Besides acting as a reference standard the above wooden former also acts as a shaping tool. Silver or gold pieces are made as a flattened tube for the ferrule and scabbard upper cover and slid onto the smallest end of the former and are then tapped into shape and pushed up the former by being hit lightly with a flexible plastic ruler or small hammer until they take up the desired size and shape.

Wooden holder for embossing and engraving silver and gold sheet items

Khanjar makers use a variety of rectangular wooden holders to assist them more easily emboss and engrave the thin silver and gold sheet of the Khanjar ferrule, scabbard upper cover and chape ((see Figure 392). Typically these

wooden holders have a square section of around 75mm by 50 mm. They appear to be made of softwood. A large hollow is made in the centre of the wooden holder and into this is poured hot resin, tar or bitumen to form an adhesive supportive base for the parts to be embossed or engraved. The rectangular section of the holder enables the items to be held in a more stable fashion whether in a vice, on a table or clamped in place on the floor using the khanjar makers's feet.



Figure 392 Wooden holder for embossing and engraving silver and gold sheet items © Khalid Al Busaidi

To remove the embossed and engraved items, the object and the holders are simply reheated using a soft flame from a gas torch until the resin, tar or bitumen compound softens.

Embossing punches and gravers

Khanjar makers create and use a large number of embossing punches and gravers (see Figure 393). Typically, these are made using scrap hard alloy steel available from other tools (drills, chisels, nails etc.) and also from vehicle parts such as valves and pushrods. The working end of them is modified to a particular shape using the bench or angle grinder. For embossing tools, this may involve creating an embossed shape. For gravers, the main requirement is a point shaped to carve into the silver or gold sheet to leave an appropriate profile. These tools create a small individual part of a decorative pattern built up by multiple applications of different punches and gravers.



Figure 393 Embossing and engraving tools © Khalid Al Busaidi

Stamps, embossing swages, molds and dies

In contrast to the individual decorative effects of embossing punches and gravers, decorative patterns can be added to khanjar components at a larger scale using embossing swages, stamps and dies. Typically, these comprise pieces of hard metal (e.g. steel, copper, brass) with a more complete decorative pattern stamped, engraved or cast into it (see Figure 394).



Figure 394 Stamps, embossing swages, molds and dies © Khalid Al Busaidi

The pattern is transferred by either pressing or hammering the silver or gold sample onto the pattern or by pouring molten metal over and onto the surface. Continuous patterns can be achieved by repeating the process along a sample (e.g. a strip of silver) or by soldering together individual pieces.

Wire embossing pressure roll machine

Khanjar makers create the decorative silver and gold wire used in *Al Takasir* khanjar decorations by rolling plain wire between small hardened steel rollers

with embossing patterns cut into them (see Figure 395). The embossing is transferred to the wire under pressure between the matching pairs of rollers.



Figure 395 Examples of embossing rollers for creating decoratively patterned wire © Khalid Al Busaidi

Round head hardened steel swages

Khanjar chapes are made from a matching pair of hand-dressed pieces of silver or gold sheet soldered at their edges. The edge of each piece is raised by pressing a round headed and hardened steel swage (see Figure 396) into the edge of the sheets to bend gradually to form the required shapes. Typically, these round-headed swages are the ends cut from the pushrods of early used vehicle engines.



Figure 396 Round-headed and hardened steel swages © Khalid Al Busaidi

Wooden chape form

The final shape of each chape is measured against and formed around an accurately shaped and sized hardwood form (see Figure 397). Khanjar makers have several such wooden chape forms for different types and sizes of khanjar. The chape form and the round-headed swages are used in parallel

to ensure the chape is the correct size and shape for its intended khanjar scabbard.



Figure 397 Hardwood chape form © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steel formers for silver and gold wire

The *Al Takasir* type of khanjar decoration uses a variety of regular organic curved wire elements that Khanjar makers derive from wrapping wire around a former. Typically these formers are a variety of small diameter steel tubes (see Figure 398) around which silver or gold wire is wrapped to be later cut into rings and teased into other curved decorative shapes including leaves, waves and spirals. Commonly, these steel tubes are from vehicle brake piping.



Figure 398 Steel tubing used for wrapping silver or gold wire into spirals for *Al Takisir* © Khalid Al Busaidi

Pliers

The most common forms of pliers used in creating the ferrule, scabbard upper cover and chape have parallel, flat and typically serrated jaws (see Figure 399). They are used chiefly for gripping small sheets of silver and gold and

bending wire. They are also used to pull silver wire through wire drawing plates and to flatten the silver wire.



Figure 399 Flat jawed pliers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Bowls and buckets

Khanjar makers use a variety of bowls and buckets made of copper, steel or plastic for filling with water or battery acid to soak pieces of gold or silver to remove stains and impurities (see Figure 400).



Figure 400 Plastic bowl with soapy water used for cleaning khanjar items © Khalid Al Busaidi

Soft brush

A soft brush (see Figure 401) is used with soapy water to scrub silver and gold pieces to clean them and remove impurities without damaging the surfaces of the pieces.



Figure 401 Soft brush © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools used in making the belt holder

The belt-holder is primarily made from strips of strong leather, pyramid headed rings, stud rivets, silver or gold decorated plate and glue.

Dividers

Dividers comprise two sharply pointed steel adjustable legs used in practical fields for transferring measurements and marking arcs and circles on material that can be scratched (see Figure 402). In creating the belt holder, the dividers are used to transfer the width of the pyramid headed ring to the leather.



Figure 402 Adjustable dividers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Scissors

A pair of medium-sized steel scissors (see Figure 379) is used to cut leather along the outline drawn by the pencil and dividers to form the belt holder.

Rulers

Khanjar makers use plastic, wood, metal or other rulers to draw straight lines and measure distances. The khanjar makers use it to measure the length of leather used on the belt holder and to draw decorative patterns on the silver or gold sheet covering of the belt holder (see Figure 403).



Figure 403 Ruler being used to prepare a drawing of a decorative pattern © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steel glue stick

Short lengths of metal tubes (see Figure 404) are used to spread glue on pieces of leather used in making the belt holder.



Figure 404 Steel tube used to spread glue © Khalid Al Busaidi

Portable Bench Vice

A portable bench vice (see Figure 405) is used to clamp the glued and wrapped leather strips of the belt holder whilst the glue sets.



Figure 405 A portable bench vice © Khalid Al Busaidi

Awl

This is a small pointed tool used for piercing holes, especially in leather (see Figure 406). It is used to make holes in the belt holder to install the rivets of the silver rings.



Figure 406 Awl © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools used in making silver and gold rings used in the belt holder

The rings are made by melting silver or gold and casting it into strips that are then hammered to a smaller section, cut to length, bent and their ends soldered together.

Crucible

This is a ceramic or metal container for melting silver or gold, often pre-glazed with borax (see Figure 4007).



Figure 407 Crucible © Khalid Al Busaidi

Gas torch

The gas torch (see Figure 408) burns liquefied petroleum gas stored under pressure in a tank and delivered to the torch through a flexible hose. The flame can be controlled by means of a knob on the torch. The gas torch is used to heat the crucible when melting silver or gold scraps.



Figure 408 Gas torch © Khalid Al Busaidi

Gas cylinder

Liquefied petroleum gas (also called LPG, GPL, LP Gas, liquid petroleum gas, or simply propane or butane) is used to fuel the gas torch. The gas is stored in a pressurised cylinder (see Figure 409). Gas is supplied from the

cylinder through a pressure reduction valve and flexible hose between the cylinder and the torch.



Figure 409 A gas cylinder with on/off valve, pressure reducing valve and hose © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steel or graphite mold for casting strips

Khanjar makers use a mould for casting thin silver and gold strips similar to that shown in (see Figure 410) for casting silver and gold billets except the channels.



Figure 410 Mould for casting silver and gold billets © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tongs

The tongs (see Figure 411) have two long arms operating like pliers and are used for gripping the crucible and pouring molten material to the mould.



Figure 411 Tongs © Khalid Al Busaidi

Hammer

A medium-sized hammer (see Figure 377) with a flat head is used to dress the cast silver or gold strips against a small anvil to make them thinner and longer to the section required for making the rings.

Tweezers

The tweezers (see Figure 412) are used to hold silver and gold wire for making the conical head of the rings.



Figure 412 Tweezers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Fine metal cutting file

A fine metalworking file (in the case of the photo below, a triangular file) with case hardened sharp, parallel teeth is used to remove excess material from soldering, and smooth blemishes from the rings (see Figure 413).



Figure 413 Triangular file being used to smooth soldered joint on silver ring © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tool for holding wire cone for pyramid headed rings

A metal cube

A metal cube with a wide variety of semi-circular depressions in its six sides is used to form the wire conical head of the conical headed rings prior to soldering (see Figure 414).



Figure 414 Tool for conical head rings © Khalid Al Busaidi

Ring stick

A ring stick is a tapered mandrill of circular cross section, usually made of steel that enables ring makers to easily measure and compare the sizes of rings. In addition, it provides a simple means of expanding the diameter of rings made of malleable material by tapping the ring along the mandrill to a larger diameter section. The mandrill can also be used as a former for bending wire or strips of metal around it to form a ring prior to soldering. Any tapered steel pin of appropriate size with a circular cross section can fulfill this role. The well-used ring stick used for making the rings of khanjar belt holders shown (see Figure 415) was in fact an ex-military tent peg in its earlier life.



Figure 415 Ring stick used for making rings for belt holder and belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tools used in making silver and gold wire

Silver and gold wire is created by drawing thick wire progressively through smaller and smaller dies. These are either hardened removable dies as shown in simply holes accurately drilled in a piece of hardened steel such as an old flat file. The wire may be twisted into a decorative cable using a hand drill.

Draw plate and dies

The draw plate shown (see Figure 416) comprises hardened steel replaceable dies each of standard wire gauge (SWG) in a brass holder. Wire is drawn through progressively smaller dies to make it thinner until it reaches the required size.

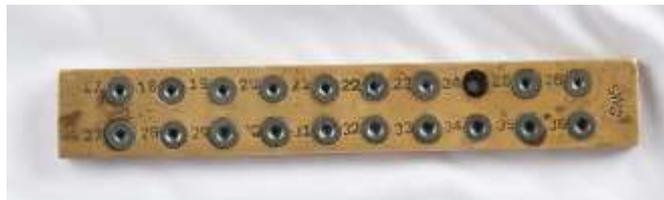


Figure 416 Draw plate with replaceable SWG dies © Khalid Al Busaidi

More commonly silver and gold wire is drawn through progressively smaller holes drilled in a hardened steel plate. The steel is heated to soften it and then reheated and quenched to harden it to reduce the wear in the holes.

Pliers

Pliers with parallel, flat, and typically serrated jaws are used for gripping and pulling silver or gold wire during the drawing process (see Figure 417).



Figure 417 Pliers with flat jaws © Khalid Al Busaidi

Hand drill

A small portable hand drill (see Figure 418) is used to twist silver and gold wire. A length of wire is folded in half and the loop is hooked onto the hand drill. The ends of the wire are tied to a nail hammered into a nearby wall or wooden bench. The wires are stretched between the nail and the hand drill and as the drill handle is turned the wire is twisted.



Figure 418 Hand drill © Khalid Al Busaidi

Nail

A conventional round wood working nail (see Figure 419) is typically hammered into a wall to attach the ends of the wire being twisted.



Figure 419 A nail © Khalid Al Busaidi

Hammer

The nail is hammered into the wall using a common hammer (see Figure 377).

Tools used in making the belt buckle

The belt buckle is typically cast in silver in a temporary mould made from cuttlefish bone.

Cuttlefish bone for belt buckle mold

This is a mould made of cuttlefish bone. The khanjar makers cut a suitably sized piece of cuttlefish bone into two matching halves. They carve the shape of the buckle and its decoration into the two halves using an engraver, pencil or anything of the appropriate size and hardness to carve the cuttlefish bone (see Figure 420). The two halves of the mold are carefully registered and then wired together, a hole is made from outside into the mould cavity to pour the molten metal into the mould.



Figure 420 A cuttlefish bone mould for a belt buckles © Khalid Al Busaidi

Hacksaw

A hacksaw (see Figure 421) is used to cut the cuttlefish bone into two matching halves.



Figure 421 Hacksaw © Khalid Al Busaidi

Pencil

A pencil (see Figure 378) is used to draw the outlines required for engraving the belt buckles.

Graver

An appropriate sized graver (see Figure 422), an engraving tool, made of metal with a relatively small pointed head that comes in different shapes and sizes, is used to carve the cuttlefish bone.



Figure 422 Graver © Khalid Al Busaidi

Crucible

A crucible (see Figure 423) is used to melt the silver or gold that will be poured into the belt buckle mold.



Figure 423 Crucible © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tongs

Tongs (see Figure 424) are used to hold the crucible and pour the metal from the crucible into the cuttlefish mold.



Figure 424 Tongs © Khalid Al Busaidi

Pliers

Pliers (see Figure 425) are used to tie wire around the cuttlefish bone mold.



Figure 425 Pliers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tols used in making studs

Dividers

Dividers (see Figure 426) are used to mark out the circular top of the stud.



Figure 426 Dividers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Shears

Shears (see Figure 427) are used to cut pieces of silver or gold for the top of the studs.



Figure 427 Shears and related tools © Khalid Al Busaidi

Swage or stamp

A swage or stamp with a pattern for the stud face (see Figure 428) is used to emboss a pattern onto the face of the stud by hammering the stud into the surface of the swage or stamp.



Figure 428 A decorative swage or stamp © Khalid Al Busaidi

Gas torch

Heat from a gas torch (see Figure 429) is used to solder the face of the stud to two heavy strips that form the rivet by which the stud holds the parts of the Khanjar belt in place.



Figure 429 Gas torch © Khalid Al Busaidi

Gas cylinder, hose and pressure reduction valve

The gas torch provides heat by burning gas from the gas cylinder. The gas cylinder delivers the gas to the gas torch via a hose (see Figure 430).



Figure 430 Gas cylinder, on/off valve, reduction valve and hose © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tweezers

Tweezers are used to hold silver wire and the stud during soldering (see Figure 431).



Figure 431 Tweezers © Khalid Al Busaidi

Materials used in the manufacture of the Omani khanjar

There is a diversity of khanjar types and denominations in Oman. Most khanjars, however, belong to particular types associated with the different governorates of the Sultanate. In part, this diversity of types of khanjar reflects the Sultanate's geographical and environmental diversity of desert environments, the marine environment as well as mountains and plains.

This geographic diversity in turn led to cultural diversity and practical differences in the detail of khanjar and thus to the specific characteristics that define different types of khanjars. This latter is reflected in materials used by khanjar makers to create the particular regional types of khanjar. The materials include:

- Silver
- Gold
- Horn
- Wood
- Marble
- Plastic
- Steel
- Leather
- Cloth
- Decorative yarns
- Glue
- Lead
- Flux powder and liquid
- Shellac
- Resin/tar/bitumen
- Tung fruit and lemons
- Battery acid
- Water
- Soap

Silver

Silver is the primary material in the manufacture of many Omani khanjars. It is used in the manufacture of many of its most visible parts including the handle, ferrule, scabbard upper cover, rings and chape. Silver is also used in the manufacture of accessories of the khanjar such as: knife, wallet, tweezers, eyeliner and holder.

Silver in sheet form is used for large components of khanjar such as the ferrule, scabbard upper cover, chape, and front and back faces of the handle along with decoration to the top of the handle (*shamarikh*), studs and covering of some leather parts. Silver in cast form is used for bosses on the handle, particularly in *Al Saidi* khanjars, for making rings for the belt holder, for the buckle and sometimes for rivets.

Thin silver wire, decorated and plain is used in decorations on the handle, ferrule, scabbard upper cover and chape decorations; in stitched decoration on the scabbard cover and the belt, in lashing the belt holder to the scabbard, and in binding the decorative front surfaces of the scabbard and belt to the cloth back linings. When silver wire is used as part of the decoration of sheets silver pieces such as the ferrule, Scabbard upper cover and chape, this is known as the *Al Tikasir* style, and most commonly found on the *Al Saidi* khanjars. An example of extensive use of silver in khanjar making is shown (see Figure 432).



Figure 432 Silver used in khanjar parts © Khalid Al Busaidi

Gold

Gold is also widely used in khanjar making. Its two limitations compared to silver are that it is a softer metal and not structurally as strong or stiff, and it is more expensive. Gold is a relatively common material in the manufacture of *Al Suri* khanjar, and some types of *Al Saidi* khanjar. Gold is used to replace silver in part or whole in the manufacture of most decorative khanjar parts including parts of the handle, ferrule, scabbard upper cover and chape. Gold is also used for manufacture of the secondary accessories of the khanjar to complete the aesthetic side.

Khanjar makers manufacturing the *Al Suri* and *Al Sifani* khanjars typically use gold in decorating and engraving the handle, especially the two bosses on the handle of sun or star shape (*shams*, *nigmah*). These shapes on the handle along with partial replacement of silver with gold in the ferrule and scabbard upper cover, gold plate on the belt holder, the gold chape, and gold stitching on the scabbard cover (see Figure 433).



Figure 433 Gold and silver khanjar details © Khalid Al Busaidi

In the case of gold detail in sewing, this is sometimes achieved by use of gold-coloured nylon thread because gold thread is relatively weak and difficult to sew.

Horn

Horn is one of the most common materials for the handle of expensive higher quality khanjars. The choice of material used in the manufacture of the

handle depends on the desire of the owner of the khanjar. Traditionally, horn handles for khanjar have been made from rhino horn known locally as (*zaraf*) giraffe and elephant tusk, ivory.

These materials are now subject to international controls on being traded internationally and consequently having become difficult to source by khanjar makers for their clients. This has prompted some of the khanjar makers to buy the old khanjars that individuals have inherited from their parents and grandparents (because a lot of Omani families still possess them) in order to reuse the rare handle horn. Examples of khanjar handles are shown below made of rhino horn (see Figure 434) and ivory (see Figure 435).



Figure 434 Handle made of rhino horn © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 435 Khanjar handle made of ivory elephant tusk © Khalid Al Busaidi

Wood

Wood is used in the manufacture of khanjar scabbard cores (see Figure 436) and some khanjar handles. Any type of wood can be used in the manufacture of the scabbard, providing it is reasonably hard, does not have structural flaws such as knots and cracks, and does have an easy cutting nature.



Figure 436 Wooden scabbard core © Khalid Al Busaidi

For khanjar handles, the two main woods used are high quality samples from the sandalwood (*Santalum*) species and bitter wood (*Quassia amara*). Sandalwood is heavy, yellow and fine-grained and has a pleasant aromatic fragrance that is emitted for decades. It adds fragrance to cloth items the Khanjar is stored alongside.

Sandalwood also has antimicrobial properties. Bitter wood (*Quassia amara*) has an attractive coloured grain for a khanjar handle (see Figure 437). Bitter wood has many chemical effects. It is an effective insecticide (and thus a khanjar with a bitter wood handle protects clothes it is stored with) and helps repel mosquitos and hair parasites. It also has antimalarial effects.



Figure 437 Handle made of bitter wood (*Quassia amara*) © Khalid Al Busaidi

Marble

Marble is increasingly used in recent modern khanjar handle production (see Figure 438). It has also occasionally been used in the manufacture of scabbard cores and covers, which is down to the wishes of the owner of the khanjar.



Figure 438 Marble khanjar handles © Khalid Al Busaidi

Plastic

A variety of plastic materials are increasingly used in the recent modern manufacture of khanjar handles. One of the advantages is the ability to have a large colour range of handles and to embody decoration into the handle during the plastic moulding processes and thus reduce the work of the khanjar makers (see Figure 439). The most common colour choice is a two-colour black and white design.



Figure 439 Khanjar handle made of plastic with integrated decoration © Khalid Al Busaidi

Steel

Steel is used in the manufacture of khanjar blades. Traditionally, the quality of steel from which a khanjar blade was created was highly valued. An Omani man was judged on the quality and value of the khanjar blade he carried, so the khanjar maker or owner was keen to choose the good type of steel to give the blade strength and rigidity, and sharpness and the ability to keep a good edge.

Steel is also used in the manufacture of the small knife that is one of the common accessories for the *Al Nizwani* and *Al Suri* khanjars, and used in the manufacture of other accessories such as the tweezers, eyeliner and holder. A sample of steel is used in the manufacture of a contemporary khanjar blade is shown (see Figure 440).



Figure 440 Typical sample of steel used for contemporary khanjar blade © Khalid Al Busaidi

In earlier times, khanjar blades were likely made from small billets of wootz steel from Southern India or billets of the wootz offspring, Damascus steel, as manufactured in the Lebanon and throughout the Middle East. This is indicated by the traditional method of construction of hand forging khanjar blades from a billet.

There appears to be no evidence of other methods of creating high quality blade steel, for example through layering hard and tough slices of steel and folding to achieve a hard exterior on a tough core as found in Japanese blades. The current preferred steel material for good khanjar blades is contemporary good quality alloy spring steel. This is widely available at reasonable price and has similar properties to the best wootz and Damascus steels.

More recently, however, there has been a reduced emphasis on the quality of steel used in khanjar blades, except in terms of stainlessness. The khanjar blade has become less important compared to the decoration. In part this is because the blade is now of little use in everyday life, whereas the decoration still indicates status and wealth. Similarly, the small knife and other accessories are now not prerequisites of good health and everyday life, as

they were in previous times. Now they have become primarily ornamental accessories.

Leather

Leather is used in the manufacture of several essential parts in the Omani khanjar including the belt holder, the scabbard cover, belts and belt components. Leather from different animals is used. Typical sources of leather are cows, sheep and goats, although occasionally more exotic leathers may be used (see Figure 441).



Figure 441 Sample of heavy leather used in manufacturing khanjar belt holders © Khalid Al Busaidi

Leather is typically decorated by sewing with silver wire, sometimes mixed with gold coloured sewing thread, Sometimes the leather's own surface is a significant part of the decoration as in *Al Suri* khanjar scabbards. Leather is also used in manufacturing some of the secondary accessories such as: wallet or sheath of the extra knife, which are found in *Al Nizwani* and *Al Suri* khanjars.

Cloth

Khanjar makers are keen on producing every part of the khanjar in an aesthetic form using luxurious brushed fabrics in various colours as the back lining of the scabbard cover (see Figure 442) and the inner lining of the belt parts.



Figure 442 Cloth lining of back of Al Saida khanjar scabbard © Khalid Al Busaidi

Decorative yarns

In some types of khanjar, decorative yarns are used in conjunction with other material to decorate scabbard covers (see Figure 443) and belts. The various designs provide aesthetic touches on the khanjar in line with the decorations on its other components.



Figure 443 Khanjar scabbard decorated with yarn © Khalid Al Busaidi

Nylon filament in silver, gold and other colours (see Figure 444) are increasingly used to supplement the decorations on khanjar scabbard covers and belts.



Figure 444 Nylon yarn in silver, gold and other colours © Khalid Al Busaidi

The golden colour yarn blends with the silver in decorating *Al Suri* khanjars. The increasing use of silver, gold and other colours of synthetic yarns has led to new decorative developments in khanjar as shown (see Figure 445).



Figure 445 Scabbard cover decorated with nylon yarn © Khalid Al Busaidi

Glue

Glue is used to fix many parts of the khanjar in its final form. For example, glue is used to fix the blade to the handle; to install the scabbard cover to the scabbard core; to fix the belt lining to the back of the belt components; to attach the belt holder to the scabbard, and to install the chape at the end of the scabbard.

The most common glue used in khanjar making currently is a synthetic rubber-based contact and PVA adhesive such as shown (see Figure 446).



Figure 446 Glue © Khalid Al Busaidi

Lead

Lead is melted to the space in the centre of the ferrule, scabbard upper cover and chape to protect them from damage whilst they are being embossed and engraved (see Figure 447). The lead is melted out of the silver pieces and reused.



Figure 447 Lead filling scabbard upper cover for embossing © Khalid Al Busaidi

Flux powder and liquid

Flux powder, typically borax, is used during the process of soldering silver pieces. It is used to line crucibles and to speed up the process of melting silver and lead (see Figure 449).



Figure 448 Flux powder © Khalid Al Busaidi

Flux liquid (non-borax) is increasingly used during the process of soldering in the areas of meeting the end of the silver pieces. This liquid is used to speed up the process of melting silver when it was formed when manufacturing the ferrule, scabbard upper cover, chape and rings (see Figure 449).



Figure 449 Flux liquid © Khalid Al Busaidi

Shellac

Shellac resin (derived from an insect) is used as filler, as a coating for wood and to help bind the blade to the handle.

Resin/tar/bitumen

Hot resin, tar or bitumen is poured onto a wooden holder in which items to be engraved are set (see Figure 450). Pressing the items into the hot liquid and allowing them to cool provides a way of holding them for embossing and engraving without damage. The pieces are released from the holders by reheating the resin, tar or bitumen to a liquid state.



Figure 450 Khanjar pieces held in resin while being embossed and engraved © Khalid Al Busaidi

Tung fruit and lemons

Dried Tung fruits are used in polishing and preserving silver pieces after the completion of the etching process. Tung fruit is a type of acid fruit that also contains usefully preservative oil that can also be used by the owner of khanjar during cleaning on a regular basis to maintain the silver sheen for a long time. Tung fruit (see Figure 451) are, however, highly poisonous.



Figure 451 Tung fruit © Khalid Al Busaidi

More recently, some people have started using lemon juice (also acid) to clean khanjar due to its easy availability.

Battery acid

Sulphuric acid from old vehicle batteries is used to clean and polish the different silver parts at each stage of manufacture. After the completion of soldering the silver pieces are directly placed in battery acid to remove the blackening caused by the flame (see Figure 452). Battery acid is also used by some khanjar makers to clean their khanjars.



Figure 452 Using battery acid to clean khanjar parts © Khalid Al Busaidi

Water

Water is used to cool newly soldered pieces and to temper the khanjar blade. It is also used for removing flux from newly soldered parts and removing battery acid.

Soap

Soapy water with soap powder is used in cleaning khanjar parts, particularly removing the resin after embossing and engraving by scrubbing them with a stiff brush (see Figure 453).



Figure 453 Using soapy water and a stiff brush to clean khanjar parts © Khalid Al Busaidi

Chapter 5

Wearing Omani Khanjar

Wearing the Omani khanjar

This chapter mainly focuses the way and the style in which the Omanis wear the Khanjar in formal and informal occasions.

The Omani Khanjar is tucked underneath a waist belt and is situated at the front and center of the wearer's body. Now it is treated as a "ceremonial" dagger worn only for formal events and functions. It is considered to be the Oman's ethnographic weapon.

The khanjar is a symbol of Omani culture and has been relevant to the dignity of the Omani masculine identity since time immemorial. Wearing it completes the visual representation of Omani identity and prestige only when worn with the official uniform comprising the Omani robe, the *dishdasha* and with a turban (*musar*). On formal occasions, a white *dishdasha* is obligatory.

The Omani official uniforms can be worn with *bisht* (robe) or *shal* (cummerbund) on some formal occasions, including social and religious celebrations and national day (see Figure 454).



Figure 454 Omani man wearing the khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

It is a prestigious opportunity for an Omani to wear his uniform and certain steps must be followed to show the person's appropriate appearance formally and socially in events at home or abroad (in the Gulf countries only) or when representing the Sultanate in international and regional forums.

Wearing the khanjar formally

- 1- The *dishdasha* should be worn.
- 2- The *musar* is usually wrapped around the head appropriate to the traditions of the states and provinces of the Sultanate. However, everyone has the opportunity to choose the way that suits him (see Figure 455).



Figure 455 Omani man in formal dress © Khalid Al Busaidi

- 3- The *dishdasha* is pulled forward from both sides (left and right) using both hands and is then folded, narrowed and applied to the body (see Figure 456).



Figure 456 Omani man preparing his dishdasha © Khalid Al Busaidi

- 4- The left hand is placed on the middle of the waist.
- 5- Hold the khanjar in the right hand and put it at the waist, then holds it with the left hand (see Figure 457).



Figure 457 Omani man preparing to wear his khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- 6- Using the right hand the belt is wrapped around the waist from the back (see Figure 458).



Figure 458 Omani man holding his belt to close it © Khalid Al Busaidi

- 7- The belt is adjusted to the appropriate length before it is secured (see Figure 459 and 460).



Figure 459 Adjusting the belt length © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 460 Omani man with final outfit © Khalid Al Busaidi

There are several types of Omani khanjars and each type of khanjar is worn differently. The *Al Saidi* khanjar can be worn to either side whereas the *Al Nizwani* khanjar must wear in the middle of the waist. The *Al Suri*, *Al Batini*, *Al Ganobi* and *Al Hanshiah* khanjars are worn on the left of the waist and hung diagonally (see Figure 461 and 462).



Figure 461 Wearing the Al Saidi khanjar on the middle of the waist © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 462 Wearing the Al Suri khanjar on the left and diagonally © Khalid Al Busaidi

Occasions that the khanjar is worn

Omani men are keen to wear the full national costume as a symbolic manifestation of joy and celebration at social events, on the national day, religious ceremonies and private celebrations. There are four ways to accessorise uniforms with the khanjar.

The khanjar worn with a turban and stick

The *khaizaran* is a stick made from bamboo. It is carried on several occasions including weddings and engagements known as *malkah*. It is also worn for *Al Habtah* or *Al Hilqah*, which are popular markets held before the *Eid* (*Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid Al-Adha*), or, when offering condolences, or meeting for lunch or dinner (see Figure 463).



Figure 463 Wearing the khanjar and holding the khaizaran © Khalid Al Busaidi

The khanjar worn with a turban, *shal*, and a sword or stick

The *shawl* is wrapped around the man's waist and his khanjar. The *shawl* may also match the turban. Usually the groom wears the khanjar this way on the day of his wedding or his engagement, and this distinguishes him from the rest of the guests (see Figure 464 and 465).



Figure 464 Wearing a khanjar with a shawl and holding a khaizaran © Khalid Al Busaidi

Figure 465 Wearing a khanjar with a shal and holding sword © Khalid Al Busaidi

The khanjar worn with a turban with *bisht* and sword or stick

The *dishdasha* may be worn with a *bisht* or open robe over it, in addition to the turban. The man may choose between holding a sword or *khaizaran*. This outfit is usually worn for celebrations (see Figure 466).



Figure 466 Wearing a khanjar with a bisht and holding a sword © Khalid Al Busaidi

Wearing a khanjar with a turban and *bisht*

Wearing a khanjar with a *bisht* and turban is part of formal dress for official occasions and is also worn when representing the Sultanate of Oman in official celebrations and regional and international forums (see Figure 467).



Figure 467 Wearing the khanjar with a bisht © Khalid Al Busaidi

The khanjar and boys

Parents are keen to accustom their boys to wearing a khanjar between the ages of two and twelve years, especially at family events, social occasions, religious celebrations, and national day. The aim is to preserve the tradition and inspire a love for an Omani identity. Boys wear a khanjar in several forms as follows:

Khanjar worn with a turban

This style, where the khanjar is worn with a *dishdasha*, is for boys aged between six and twelve. The *dishdasha* may come in different colours appropriate to the child's age. A turban, which is consistent with the colour of the *dishdasha*, is wrapped around the boy's head. He also wears a small Khanjar around the waist (see Figure 468).



Figure 468 Boy wearing child's khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The belt

This way to wear the khanjar is for boys aged between two and five. The *dishdasha* may come in different colours commensurate with the boy's age. A turban, which is consistent with the colour of the *dishdasha*, is wrapped around his head. Wrapped around his waist is a small belt with a silver clasp with a design similar to a khanjar design (see Figure 469).



Figure 469 Boy wearing a belt © Khalid Al Busaidi

Conclusion

The Omani khanjar is representative of national heritage and civilisation to the people of Oman. It is indexical of the history, geography and cultural symbols of Oman throughout the epochs. The Omani khanjar embodies aesthetics and creativity. One can see the art and the beauty of this industry in every khanjar. What distinguishes this industry is the use of handcrafting wherever possible to the extent where such skills are invested with high cultural value and importance.

The researcher conducted an in-depth study of the Omani khanjar to celebrate its beauty and honour both its status as a design object and the role of the Omani khanjar makers as well. The research is also in honour of His Majesty *Sultan Qaboos*, who is led by the grace of God to steer the development and prosperity of our great nation, Oman. Lastly the research is aimed at encouraging this generation to be proud of its history and heritage. Research on the Omani khanjar was a necessary and an urgent need in the researcher's point of view so as not to lose this rich heritage due to the factors such as technological and cultural changes and other developmental processes.

The researcher relied primarily on interviews and field study to collect contemporary and historical information about the Omani khanjar and all the stories and paraphernalia associated with it, which was one of the objectives of the study.

Background information about the Sultanate is necessary for understanding the khanjar more fully. One needs to first know the geographical environment of the Sultanate and the history of the Sultanate as well as its present conditions if only for comparative purposes. Furthermore, one must endeavour to understand the nature of human personality in Oman, and the impact of various social and cultural factors associated with the Omani khanjar.

The researcher examined past and present uses of the khanjar, and also linked these to the various manifestations of life and hospitality in Oman as well as religious celebrations, social events, travel, and traditional arts.

Oman is a veritable treasure-trove of traditional and folk arts. The researcher is personally interested in the traditional arts because they convey a sense of place and identity. Omanis still cling to these traditional practices on different occasions. They are also proud and eager to wear traditional costumes including the Omani khanjar.

His Majesty the Sultan and his government care and attaches great importance to Omani heritage including crafts, and it was necessary to highlight this concern through the allocation of a chapter titled "Government Attention to the Craft Industries" (see page 47) in order to outline the various aspects of his contributions.

The different topics and themes contained in the research were documented in writing and pictures (audio, video and still images) during field visits and workshops for artisans or visits to the castles and forts. This study aimed to document the basic parts and accessories of the Omani Khanjars, and identify the types of designs that adorn some parts of the khanjar such as the handle, belt holder, scabbard cover and chape, with a view to analysing the similarities and differences in past and present industry practices.

The researcher also focussed on the basic materials, tools and machineries used in manufacturing the khanjar, as well as the more specialized materials and tools used by khanjar makers in manufacturing the specific parts.

Omani Khanjars have different types of specifications that distinguish them from other Khanjars known to the Omanis and in particular the khanjar makers. The researcher was also keen to clarify the specifications of each type as well as the similarities and differences between them.

Modern Khanjars only started to appear in the current era when men began wearing more than one type of Omani khanjar and not restricted to specific ones only. The appearance of the fake Khanjars in the late twentieth century was a threat to the identity of Oman. It was alien to the Omani society. The

researcher considered it important to include discussion and definition of these Khanjars and educate the new generation about them.

In addition, the researcher has included an examination of some old-fashioned Khanjars that existed "without name". It is necessary for these to have officially registered affiliation alongside other known Omani Khanjars. The research has also addressed proper maintenance and storage of Khanjars, as well as the ways and forms of wearing it.

The objective of this research was to position the Omani khanjar in its cultural context, to investigate its typography and to record for the first time the ways in which it is traditionally made. The research ultimately endeavours to be both a reference and a resource for other researchers and those interested in the Omani khanjar.

There are few scholarly publications focussed on the Omani khanjar. Most are either general studies or press reports looking at only one or more selected aspects of the khanjar, but not examining it at length. There are some reports and manuals that have been released by the Public Authority for Craft Industries and Ministry of Heritage and Culture, which focus on the Omani khanjar as one of the legacies of the traditional crafts or silver industries, or briefly discuss it as a tool or utensil in the context of the silver industry. These publications are informative but they arguably have limited use as references for scholars and those interested in the Omani khanjar. This is why the researcher has created a website as the first stage in disseminating the findings of his research. The website will be maintained after the completion of the PhD and developed as a resource site for the study of the khanjar.

The lack of references and published literature dealing with the Omani khanjar as a main theme has made the research difficult and, in turn, led to the adoption of the field study component of this research, which include interviews, meetings and contacts with specialists and artisans. Nevertheless, in order to gather all relevant contextual information for this project, the researcher also collated and studied available published sources which deal directly or indirectly to the following topics: traditional dress and

Arabian weapons, Oman's history, silverware, and legacies of the traditional Omani khanjar industry.

Recommendations

Recommendations by the researcher are in two parts, the first addresses the working practices of the khanjar craftsmen. The second addresses the broader cultural environment.

Craftsmen and workshops

The working environment for craftsmen needs regulation in order to protect the quality of life for the khanjar makers and maintain the quality of the khanjar.

- Educate and sensitize artisans with regard to occupational health and safety issues: The researcher recommends the establishment of training workshops for artisans addressing different topics such as the importance of using first aid and fire fighting. The researcher believes that such workshops may help increase awareness about occupational health and safety issues in the workplace.
- Provide proper tools to artisans: The researcher noted during his visits to many of the workshops that artisans were not using proper tools. Job safety was not properly understood or implemented in some workshops. For example, during forging or smelting silver or when producing different parts of the khanjar, artisans often neglected to use protective gloves to prevent injury or protect their hands from unexpected injuries.
- Provide special fans for ventilation, fire extinguishing equipment and a first aid box in all khanjar manufacturing workshops.

- Artisans also need to use special protective glasses that have the same specifications as those used in blacksmithing or carpentry workshops to protect the eyes from shrapnel, sawdust or smoke resulting from industry operations when manufacturing different parts of the khanjar.

The institutional and cultural context

The groundwork for preserving and codifying the history and production of the Omani khanjar is already in place institutionally, the researcher suggest ways in which it might be further developed.

- Retain the correct specifications of the Omani khanjar: The researcher thanks the current government agencies and commends their efforts, and recommends that these efforts be intensified in order to maintain the correct specifications of the khanjar especially given the present spread of fake khanjars in the domestic market and the seeming enthusiasm of some young people in acquiring these fakes. Further legal action is required to curb the spread of this phenomenon, which if left unchecked could lead to a distortion of Omani identity and have detrimental implications in the future. The researcher also proposes the formation of a special committee to follow up and take legal action against violators.
- Archive the work of elderly artisans especially those with expertise in heritage and traditional craft industries, including the manufacture of Omani khanjars: The Public Authority for Craft Industries and the Ministry of Heritage and Culture have made a lot of effort in this area, however the researcher recommends intensifying their roles and proposes concerted efforts by the authorities and various governmental institutions to maintain the traditional legacies. The researcher has witnessed first-hand the significance of these elderly khanjar artisans as living repositories of memories, stories and experiences. Some of the artisans have even suggested that the researcher assumes responsibility for documenting this aspect of Omani heritage because a lot of this history has not yet been

documented and remains only in the memories of parents and grandparents.

- The researcher recommends educating the new generation about the correct specifications of the Omani khanjar and introducing them to authentic khanjars through lectures aimed at different segments of the community and young people, most notably those at schools and colleges, as well as preparing and distributing brochures because such collective endeavours may increase awareness and prompt people to take responsibility and in still in them the desire to preserve Omani traditional culture, including the khanjar, from extinction and distortion.
- Encourage and preserve the craft of silver engraving which is characteristic of the Sultanate of Oman: What distinguish the Omani khanjar are the silver engravings found on different parts of the khanjar such as the handle, ferrule, scabbard cover and chape. These engravings are inspired by the Omani environment or derived from Islamic inscriptions. The researcher has noted that there are some debates over the quality of khanjar inscriptions but these largely do not concern the graphics and design elements for which the Omanis are renowned. Omani silverwork therefore must be maintained, and the researcher suggests a festival of silver engravings to show the beauty of this art, celebrate the creativity of the artisans and help preserve this Omani heritage

Appendices

Appendix 1

Geography and History

Geography of the Sultanate of Oman

Oman is the third largest country located on the southeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and the Sultanate of Oman has a land area of about 139,965 square kilometres and a 3,165 km coastline (Aldifa, W. 2012, P 42). As of December 2014, it has a population of 4,477,000 million people, according to the statement issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information. There are four million four hundred and seventy seven thousand people. Three million two hundred and twelve thousand six hundred and ninety-three people are of Omani origin representing 58% of the population, and 1,744,000 one million seven hundred and forty four thousand people are newcomers representing 42% of the population (Almalomat, A. A. L. w. 2014).

http://www.ncsi.gov.om/NCSI_website/N_default.aspx

http://www.ncsi.gov.om/NCSI_website/book/SYB2014/contents.htm?zoom_highlight=population

Religion: Islam is the official religion of the state.

Languages: Arabic is the official language. English is used widely along with some other languages such as German and French.

Capital: Muscat Governorate.

Flag: The flag consists of three stripes (white - red - green) with a red stripe on the left contains a logo of the Sultanate with two crossed swords and the Omani khanjar. The white colour symbolises peace and prosperity. The red colour symbolises the battles fought by the people of Oman in its long history of the expulsion of foreign invasions.

The green colour symbolises fertility and agriculture in the country (see Figure 470). The logo (two crossed swords and Omani khanjar) in the top quarter of the flag is also used in government institutions government (see Figure 471). The official use of the Omani khanjar in the logo is of importance as it is a national symbol that Omanis are proud of. The uses of the logo in the Omani flag and on the Omani currency as well as by government ministries and in the public streets signify the pride of the people in Omani heritage and authenticity (Giran, R. 1983, P 40-42).



Figure 470 Flag of Sultanate of Oman © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 471 Logo or symbol of Sultanate of Oman © Khalid Al Busaidi

Natural resources: Petroleum, natural gas, fisheries and agriculture.

Currency used: The local currency is Omani *Rial*, which is divided into 1000 *Bisa*. Banknotes are in denominations of 50, 20, 10, 5, 1, 0.500 and 0.100 *Rials*. Coins are in denominations of 50, 25, 10 and 5 *Rials*. The Omani *Rial* is almost equivalent to U.S. \$ 2.58 Aleilam, W. 2014, P 17.

What distinguishes Omani coins is the printed logo of the Sultanate (two crossed swords and the Omani khanjar) on one side. The paper currency usually carries one of the features of Omani heritage or Renaissance in addition to the Sultanate's logo as well as the image of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said (see Figure 472 and 473).



Figure 472 Paper currencies in Oman © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 473 Coins currencies in Oman © Khalid Al Busaidi

Location of the Sultanate in the world

Oman's location in the south-eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula has been of great importance. It enabled the Omani people to become stakeholders in the business with India and China. Since the great civilizations of Mesopotamia, copper metal has been critical in that region. Oman was an important destination for people prior to Islam becoming a significant movement in the Arabian Peninsula and since then has become one of the important centres of Islam.

The Sultanate rose to prominence in the seventeenth century. *Al Ya'ariba* managed to expel the Portuguese from the coast of Oman, and went on to expand its territory during the rule of *Al Busaidi*. The Sultanate had the most important commercial influence in the Indian Ocean and its surrounding seas. This important commercial role paved the way for world trade in Oman.

Oman returned to openness in 1970, after it had been in isolation for so long. The wealth of oil and natural gas - as well as the widening of their business markets - has made Oman an important trade partner on the global level (see Figure 474). Its strategic location at the entrance to the most oil-rich region in the world - at the entrance to the Gulf - and its location on the opposite side of the communist regime in one of the countries south of the Arabian Peninsula have given it an important role in the world (Sholtish, F. 1980, P 16).



Figure 474 Oman's location in the world map © Khalid Al Busaidi

Geographic Location

Oman is located in West Asia and occupies the south-east of the Arabian Peninsula on the south-east of the Tropic of Cancer. To the north of Oman is the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to the north-west is the United Arab Emirates. To the west is Saudi Arabia and to the south-west is the republic of Yemen. It is surrounded by sea in the north and the east and the Omani coast opens up to the Indian Ocean. It has a south coast overlooking the Arabian Sea in the north-east of the Gulf of Oman (see Figure 475).

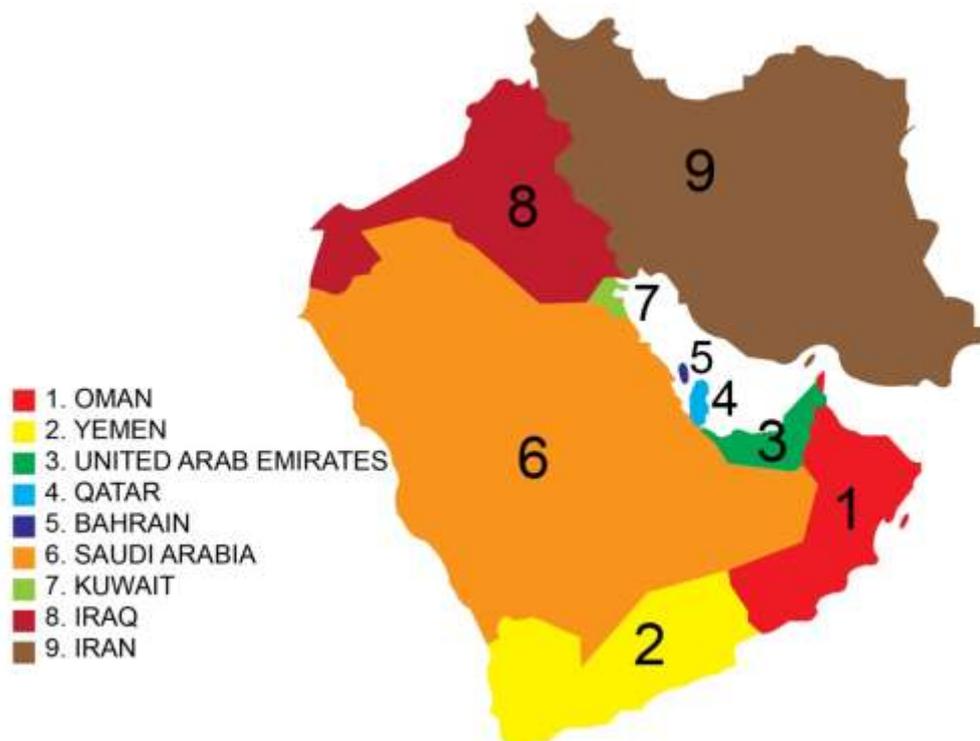


Figure 475 Oman's location in the Arabian Peninsula © Khalid Al Busaidi

Oman lies on the Strait of Hormuz, which is one of the strategically located straits in the world. This strategic location allows the Sultanate of Oman to control one of the oldest and most important trade routes in the world, which connects the Indian Ocean to the Gulf. This trade route was relevant to the ancient civilisations of the world and continues to be so for Oman (Almaskiri, A. 2008, P 9).

Oman has a group of small islands in the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz. The most important of these islands is *Salama wa Banatiha*, which

is located in the Arabian Sea, followed by a group of islands known as *Halaniyat* and *Masirah*.

The geographical location of the Sultanate has had an effect on the warm atmosphere, lifestyle and dress of the Omanis, both in the past and the present day. Men wear long clothes (*dishdasha*) in white or light colours for the hot weather and to adapt to the high temperatures. They also wear head wraps or turbans (*Musar*) or hats known as (*Komah*), which are usually embroidered by women. Men would also wear a baler or Omani Khanjar as used in the district. These days the Omani man still keeps Basis dress and proudly wears the Omani Khanjar on special occasions.

The Omani women wear different fashions according to the different governorates of the Sultanate. Recently many options have been introduced, but all of these options specify modesty, which is consistent with the Islamic religion and the customs and traditions of the Omani society.

Importance of the location in the Arabian Gulf

The Sultanate is considered as a safety line due to its strategic location especially for the Gulf region, which thrives on natural resources and oil. It represents a point of contact between the countries of the East and the West in the Middle East. Owing to its importance in political, economic and security issues, Oman represents the Strait of Hormuz, which is the most important regional junction that in turn makes the Sultanate strategic location for the Gulf region.

The Arabian Gulf has witnessed humanity's first steps in access to the sea. The Omanis share in those steps in leading civilisation and in establishing regular contact among a number of divergent civilisations. The Arabian Gulf has passed through periods of prosperity and recession. Throughout all these times, the Omanis have played prominent role in the region (Gadan, F. 1985 - 1986, P 226).

The importance of geographic location

The location of Oman is strategic in that it sits on the throne of the Indian Ocean, and controls the gate of the Arabian Gulf, which is the jewel of the world in its contribution to the global economy (oil). The site of the Sultanate is also of importance to tourism because it represents a node and meeting point for states coast of the Indian Ocean, the east and west towards the Arabian Peninsula and Mesopotamia and eventually Europe (Algariri, A. 2004, P 39-41).

This site has helped with the development of trade the economy especially business. Owing to this cheaper type of trade through commercial exports and imports since ancient times, the names of many goods that are common in Mesopotamia are linked by their names to Oman despite the fact that Oman does not produce them (Algariri, A. 2004, P 84-86).

In the past, a lot of goods and commodities were imported from abroad, whether food or commercial products or consumer goods, including materials and tools used by the Omanis in some silver craft industries, and the materials used in the manufacture of the Omani Khanjar, such as ivory to make the handle of the Khanjar, as well as leather and silver to complete the rest of the parts of the Khanjar.

The site has been of political importance to Oman through history. It seized control of several political powers on the trade routes (land and sea), which included trade to the Old World (Asia, Africa and Europe), as well as the tribes inhabiting the eastern and south-east of the Arabian Peninsula. That privileged position was important in controlling the trade routes since the period of the Islamic caliphate in the middle ages (Khamal, E. 2009, P 11-12).

The location near the sea provided Omani people with employment and commercial mediation in the transport of goods between the Indian Ocean on the one hand and the Gulf states and the eastern Mediterranean on the other hand. The East Coast ports in Oman received commercial goods and several different foreign traders. Similarly, Omani traders also migrated to overseas, where they lived and enriched in the local populations and exchanged

cultures with one another. This cultural exchange is evident in many of the countries such as Kenya and Zanzibar and museums of these countries still retain the artefacts such as Omani manuscripts and authentic Omani handicrafts and most notably the Omani Khanjar, which was and remains a symbol of Omani civilisation.

Oman had overseas interests. It developed a large fleet that played a big role in the political history of the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean (alla, M. A. 1988, P 20-21).

The Cartographical Location and Climate of the Sultanate

Oman is located in the subtropical climate zone that extends from the region of Mauritania passing through North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula and Iran, even China. Rainfall is rare in this region in general, as drought prevails throughout the year, and the region is characterised by high temperatures (Sholtish, F. 1980, P 17).

The Sultanate of Oman lies between 16.39 north latitude and 26.30 north of the equator, stretching from the *Sarfet* city of *Dhofar* on the Yemen border in the far south-west to the scattered islands in northern *Musandam* on the Peninsula in the northern part of the Sultanate.

It is located between 52.00 east longitude on the *Rimal Ebin Hamouda* southwest sands of the Empty Quarter and the 59.50 east longitude line at *Ras Al Had* east of the Sur City eastern region of the Sultanate (Sholtish, F. 1980, P 18).

Terrain

Oman consists of mainly mountains and plains and valleys and the coast, and the mountains that surround Oman and the desert have had a fundamental impact on the psyche of the people and how they have evolved. Previously it was the sea link between Oman and the outside world that was considered an important resource for the population to live on. Despite the possibility of crossing it, the desert continues to be a main obstacle between Oman and direct contact to the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. The high

mountains (see Figure 476) pose barriers to protect the Sultanate from foreign invasion and foreign interventions, whether these are in the form of invading armies or Western ideas (Albusaidi, S. 2012, P 60).

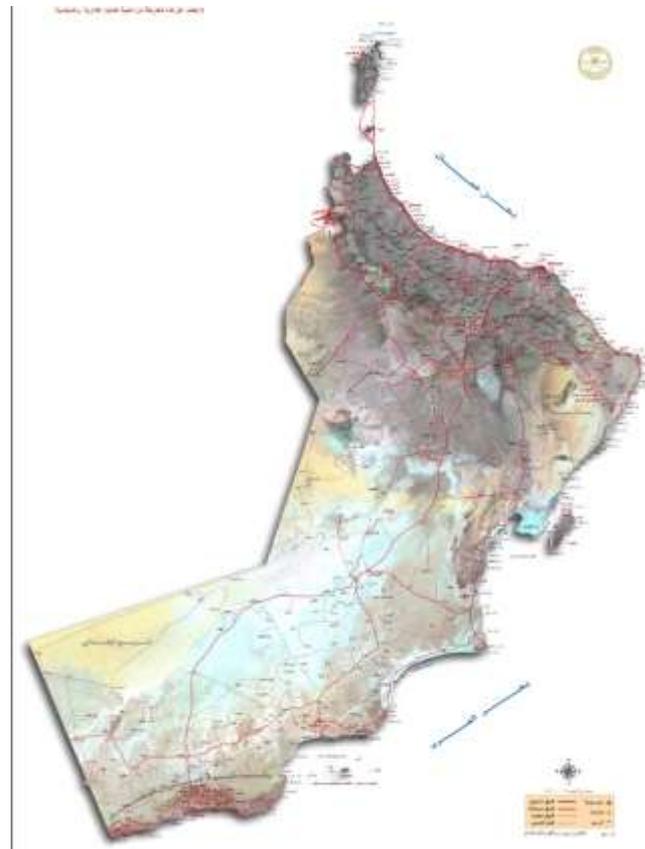


Figure 476 Mountains of Oman © Illustration from Scherpenzeel, E 2002

Oman has many mountains of varying heights. From the stone mountains of *Dhofar*, *Al Hagar Al Sharqi* and *Al Hagar Al Gharbi* to *Musandam* Mountains, as well as those formed in two of the plains – that is, the coastal and interior plains. The most prominent plains in the Sultanate are the *Al Batinah* plain, *Muscat* plain and *Salalah* plain.

In addition, there are multiple other terrains including sand dunes, most notably the Empty Quarter desert and *Wahibah*. Marshes abound in many areas. The most important is *Asameem* marsh. There are also gullies and caves and islands like *Al Daymaniyat* (Algariri, A. 2004, P 68).

There are two different regional terrains in Oman:

1. Oman County Heights:

Divided into Oman heights, *Al Batinah* plain and desert highlands in the west.

2. *Dhofar* County:

Divided into the coastal plain, the highlands, and the expanse of the dunes.

The diversity in the topography of the Sultanate has led to geographic and cultural diversity in the Sultanate (alla, M. A. 1988, P 45-57).

Administrative divisions of the Sultanate

The administrative division of the Sultanate has the distinctive features of the modern state. By the year 1970 there were a clear and comprehensive administrative division, which ultimately enhances national development efforts. Based on the Royal Decree No. (114/2011) the administrative division of the Sultanate was adopted and the work of the provinces was organised. The administrative division of the Sultanate includes eleven governorates: *Muscat – Dhofar – Musandam – Al Buraimi – Ad Dakhiliyah – Al Batinah north – Al Batinah – Ash Sharqiyah south – Ash Sharqiyah north – Ad Dhahirah – Al Wusta.*

Each of these provinces contains a number of states with a total of 61 states. The Ministry of Interior supervises each of these provinces with exception of the governorates of *Muscat* and *Dhofar*, which are appointed by His Majesty the Sultan according to Royal Decree. The governor in each state liaises between the government and institutions and citizens (Aleilam, W. 2014, P 48-65).

The Ministry of Interior cooperates with other ministries such as Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment, Ministry of Heritage and Culture, the Public Authority for Craft Industries and other government institutions to maintain the distinctive character of each province and the heritage and traditional craftsmanship of these provinces. It is worth mentioning that each state of the Sultanate has a state symbol. For example, the state *Sur* has a ship as its state symbol because of the local ships industry, the state of *Bahla* uses the Castle of *Bahla* to represent the historical and archaeological pride

of the state, while the Omani khanjar is a symbol of *Al Khaboura* because of its well-known *Al Batini* khanjar industry (see Figure 477).

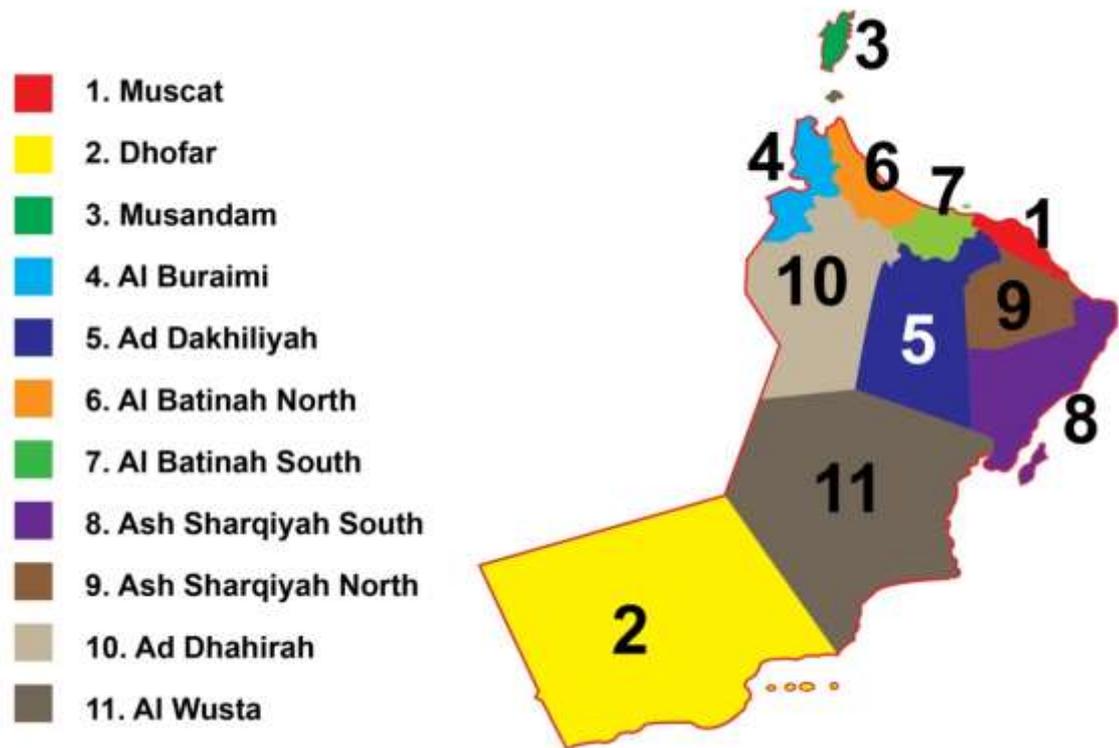


Figure 477 The administrative divisions of the Sultanate © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of Muscat

The Governorate of Muscat is located in the Gulf of Oman on the southern part of the *Al Batinah* coast and is bounded by the Gulf of Oman in the north and the mountains of *Gibal Al Hagar Al Sharqi* in the south. It is the central region of the country politically, economically and administratively. Muscat is the capital of Oman and the seat of government and the centre of the administrative system. The state also represents a vital hub of economic activity and trade in the country. Muscat is the name given to where mountains meet at their base.

It consists of six states: *Muscat*, *Muttrah*, *Al Amrat*, *Busher*, *As Seeb* and *Quriyat*.

Along the coast: 200 km (Almamari, S. 2008, P 8).

The most famous state in the Muscat governorate is Muscat:

In Muscat there are 236 resorts, 17 hot spring, 265 valleys, 432 mountains and 787 melt downs (called *Saih* in Arabic, a meltdown is the broad and flat earth space near urban communities that has become an extension of those urban areas). The governorate of Muscat also includes 19 sand dunes, 22 *Khor* surrounded by mangrove trees, 1 island, 1 cave called *Majlis Al Jin* (which is one of the largest caves in the world) located in state of *Quriyat*. *Muscat* also includes 323 old villages, 16 cities, 22 castles, 22 fortress, 14 archaeological wall relics and 63 towers (Almamari, S. 2008, P 9).

There is also the Centre for Marine Science and Fisheries, as well as a diving club and modern tourism projects in *Yeti* and *Bandar Al Khairan*. There are also a number of tourist sites and pleasure craft marinas in *Al Bustan*, *Bar Al Jasah*, *Yatti* and *Al Khairan*.

The state of Muscat includes *Al Alam* palace. Of the 5 forts, the most important are *Al Jalali* fort built by the Portuguese in 1588 and *Al Mirani* fort built by the Portuguese in 1587. There are 10 towers, consisting of 26 villages, including *Muscat*, *Sadab* and *Al Bustan*.

There are a number of government and private museums such as Museum of Mr. Faisal Bin Ali (Museum of Weapons), the Museum of Omani coins, *Bait Al Zubair* Museum, Children's Museum, Omani French Museum, Museum of the Armed Forces, Omani Museum, National Museum, and Museum of Natural History. The diversity of museums in Muscat, however, means that all of them are eager to compete and highlight the traditional legacies and ancient archaeological holdings such as silver, pottery and ceramic industries. Nevertheless all of the museums allocate a special corner to the old Omani khanjars industry harkening back to the olden times. This symbol of Oman has the largest share among these exhibits (Alobeidli, A. 1994, P 74-75).

Muscat city has become the centre of the government administration. The new city wall has expanded its gates and another new gate has been built to facilitate the unimpeded flow of traffic to and from the city (see Figure 478).

Antique forts have been refurbished along with many of the old luxury homes, in particular the new palace, which is used as the government headquarters of the Sultan, as well as for the reception of guests and foreign Kings or presidents (see Figure 479) and as a place to hold conferences and meetings between the Sultan and ministers and governors and senators (Sholtish, F. 1980, P 265-276).



Figure 478 Al Riyam garden © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 479 Al Alam palace © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 480 The slogan of the Sultan of Oman (two swords, khanjar, and crown) © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of *Dhofar*

Dhofar lays in the far south of the Sultanate, connected to the *Al Wusta* region in the east, the Yemeni border in the west, Saudi Arabia in the north and north-west, and the Arabian Sea to the south. It has a mild climate, where the temperature ranges between 15-33 degrees Celsius in summer and winter (see Figure 481). The most important characteristic of its climate is the influence of the monsoon, which blows from the Indian Ocean in the period from mid-June to mid-September (Almamari, S. 2008, P 24-25).

Dhofar consists of ten states: *Salalah*, *Taqa*, *Mirbat*, *Rakhyut*, *Thumrait*, *Dhalkut Al Mazyounah*, *Maqshen*, *Shlem*, *Halaniyat Islands* and *Sadah* (Althaqafa, W. A. w. 2007, P 115).

Salalah is the centre of the Governorate.



Figure 481 Salalah in autumn © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of *Musandam*

Musandam is located in a peninsula. It is a small size compared to other regions in the Sultanate, covering approximately 3,000 square kilometres of the total area of Oman. *Musandam* is characterised by rocky beaches. It has given the Strait of *Hormuz* importance and regarded as one of the most important sea crossings in the world (Almamari, S. 2008, P 98).

Musandam consists of four states: *Khasab, Dibba, Madha and Bukha* (see Figure 482).



Figure 482 The Mountains in Musandam © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of *Al Buraimi*

Located on the northern edge of Western Oman, *Al Buraimi* is characterised by the diversity of natural terrain spanning the plains and the mountains and sand dunes and valleys. *Al Buraimi* is the gateway to Oman from the west, from the south state of *Ibri*, from the north state of *Sohar* and *Dhank*, and from the west Al Ain City in the United Arab Emirates (Almamari, S. 2008, P 110).

Al Buraimi consists of three states: *Buraimi, Muhatha, and Al Sinainah* (see Figure 483).



Figure 483 The Castle of Al Buraimi © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of *Ad Dakhliyah*

The governorate of *Ad Dakhliyah* is strategically located within Oman. It is framed by the central Plateau descending from the slopes of *Gabal Al Akhthar* Mountain north of the desert and linked to most of the regions and governorates of the Sultanate – Governorate of *Muscat* in the north, *As Sharqiah* region in the west, *Al Wusta* region in the south and *Ad Dahera* region in the east.

It is characterised by the maintenance of many historic sites and comprises many handicraft markets specialising in the sale of handicrafts, jewellery, silver, copper and textiles. This province retains a special flavour of the glorious Omani past. The *Nizwa* state was and still remains famous for Khanjar making and the most famous Khanjar type is *Al Nizwani*. *Nizwa* still maintains its reputation in the manufacture and sale of Omani Khanjar (Almaskiri, A. 2008, P 56).

The province occupies a special place in the hearts of Omanis because of its position and role in religion and history known since ancient times, which in turn has made it one of the most prominent areas of the Sultanate.

It consists of eight states: *Nizwa*, *Samael*, *Bahla*, *Adam*, *Al Hamra*, *Izki*, *Bidbid* and *Manah* (Almamari, S. 2008, P 42).



Figure 484 The Mountains in Gabal Al Akhdar © Khalid Al Busaidi

The most famous state in the Al Dakhliyah governorate is *Nizwa*:

As the administrative centre of the governorate, *Nizwa* was one of the most famous states of the Sultanate and named the Centre of Islam in 793, most of the scholars, intellectuals and writers were from there. Also known as the city of science and history, it is famous for its castles and forts, springs, and valleys. *Nizwa* is the largest city in the *Ad Dakhliyah* governorate (Alsabagh, A. 1993, P 44).

From the words of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said: “*Nizwa* metropolitan city, which had a prominent role in the march of civilization Oman and Still starring brightness and elevation, It was a stronghold of the leaders, scientists, scholars and poets and writers, the greatest city in the heart of the Omani status and prestige Semitic estimated.”. His Majesty the Sultan declared this in his speech on National Day on 18 November 1994 on the occasion of national heritage celebration (Alseiabi, A. 2001, P 75).

Nizwa includes 89 villages. It has 6 forts and the most important is *Nizwa* Fort, built by *Imam Sultan bin Saif Al Yarubi* in the second half of 17 AD, which took 12 years to rebuild and proudly stands to this day. *Nizwa*'s 89 towers represent a long history (Almaskiri, A. 2008, P 53).

These forts are kept in their original state and contain old bedrooms, old furniture and kitchen tools along with customisable exhibits to display the

fashion of Omani men as well as women's dress and silver jewellery, and Omani khanjars belonging to olden times (see Figure 485).



Figure 485 The fort of Nizwa and the old market © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of North *Al Batinah*

The northern *Al Batinah* occupies a vital geographic location on the north coast of the Sultanate of Oman, which overlooks the Sea of Oman and extends from *Kitmat Milaha* in the north to *Ras Al Hamra'a* in the south. It is confined between the foothills of the *Al Hajar Al Gharbi* Mountains in the west and the Sea of Oman in the east along the coastal plain with a length of about 25 km (Almaskiri, A. 2008, P 66).

It consists of six states: *Sohar*, *Shinas*, *Luwa*, *Saham*, *Khaboura* and *As Suwaiq*.

The administrative centre of the governorate is *Sohar*, which is about 230 km away from the capital city *Muscat*.

The most famous state in the North *Al Batinah* governorate is *Sohar*.

Sohar was the capital of Oman before the advent of Islam. It was famous for the production and export of copper for a long time and given the conservative nature of the site it has played an important role in ancient history and is famous for its historical monuments such as the *Sohar* fort.

Exclusive to the province of North *Al Batinah* are some rare trees such as the *masoh* tree in the state of *Luwa* and the brocade tree in the state of *As Suwaiq*. It contains important traditional industries which are famous for their preservation of Khanjar making as well as swords, ships, pottery, porcelain, and Omani sweets.

The *Sohar* state had been known for its major ports locally and externally, which replaced the merchant caravans, and linked businesses to several regions in the world. The port of *Sohar* is today's commercial bridge linking the Sultanate to the other countries bordering the Indian Ocean. The port is among the largest economic projects in Oman (Almaskiri, A. 2008, P 71).

Sohar has discussed in many historical sources as well as by many historians and travellers and traders throughout the ages. It subsequently became the headquarters of the Royal Oman *Abdul and Jeffer* son *Julanda* ear greeted *Sahaabi Amr ibn al-Aas*, who extended a letter of invitation to Islam by the Prophet (Mohammed) to the people of Oman, who rushed in response to the call of Islam and welcoming the new religion. In the middle of the eighteenth century, *Sohar* was a centre for the launching of the modern Oman state, when *Imam Ahmed bin Saeed Al Busaidi*, the founder of the modern Oman, used it as a starting point to reunite the people of Oman and to subsequently expel the invaders and liberate the country.

In *Sohar* there are 4 forts (see Figure 4816), 14 bastions and 27 towers. Also located by the Industrial Port of *Sohar* is a modern oil refinery and copper smelter complex. In the state, there are 42 schools, 401 mosques, 6 hotels and 12 parks as well as a University and a number of colleges and educational institutes (Almamari, S. 2008, P 90).



Figure 486 Sohar fort © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of South *Al Batinah*

The centre of the governorate is *Rustaq*, which is famous for its historical monuments and tourist attractions such as Fort of *Al Hazim* and *Rustaq Fort*. It also has a number of hot springs such as *Ain Al Kasfa* and *Ain Al Thowarh* in *Nakhal*. *Barka* is famous for its natural beauty and coastal life, where birds and turtles live in the islands of the state (see Figure 487).

South *Al Batinah* consists of seven states: *Rustaq*, *Awabi*, *Nakhal*, *Wadi Al Mauel*, *Barka* and *Al Mosina'a*.



Figure 487 Nakhal fort © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of South Ash Sharqiah

The South *Al Sharqiah* governorate represents the head area of north-eastern Oman, with the Arabian Sea to the east.

South *Ash Sharqiah* consists of six states: *Sur, Al Kamil, Al Wafi, Jalan Bani Bu Hassan, Jalan Bani Bu Ali and Masirah.*

The administrative centre of the governorate is *Sur.*

The most famous state in the South Ash Sharqiah governorate is *Sur.*

In Oman, when anyone mentions the sea it will be invariably related to the state of *Sur.* Its name has been associated with the sea and trade since ancient times. As a part of the historical glory of the Navy, it was the home of the Phoenicians who settled there before they left for Lebanon where they gave the same name to their new home, *Sur Lebanon.* *Sur* was one of the most important maritime cities in the Indian Ocean and its most prominent shipyards were situated on the Arabian Sea. It acted as the launch station to India, the Gulf, Yemen and East Africa before the crew arrived in their vessels at the ports of South Asia and China. The area of *Ras Al Jins* contains archaeological effects which date back to the second century BC that testifies to its role in guiding cultural interaction at that time (Almamari, S. 2008, P 72).

The people of *Sur* had close contact with the inland tribes and lent them their skills in shipbuilding and maritime navigation. They also expanded business relationships stretching from India to East Africa. For that reason – and thanks also to the shallow Gulf that was not usable by ships with heavy loads – *Sur* was not exposed to invasions by the Persians and Portuguese. As a result, its urban development continued without direct foreign influence. This can be seen in the fact that there are no towers directed towards the sea, which frequently exist in coastal areas (Sholtish, F. 1980, P 25).

In the state of *Sur's* sea museum, which was established in 1987, are replicas of traditional ships (see Figure 488), tools used by sailors on their travels and models of old ships that highlight the components of each vessel (Almaskiri, A. 2008, P 91-92).



Figure 488 Fishing boat © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of North *Ash Sharqiah*

North *Ash Sharqiah* is connected to *Ash Sharqiah* by sand in the south east and the *Ad Dakhliyah* governorate to the west.

North *Ash Sharqiah* consists of seven states: *Ibra*, *Al Mudhaibi*, *Bidyah*, *Al Qabil*, *Wadi Bani Khalid*, *Damma* and *Taen*.

The administrative centre of the governorate is *Ibra* (see Figure 489).



Figure 489 Wahiba sand © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of *Ad Dahirah*

Ad Dahirah is a semi-desert area, stretching from the southern slopes of *Al Hajar Al Gharbi* in the direction of the Empty Quarter. To the east, it is separated from the *Ad Dakhliyah* governorate by the *Al Kour* Mountain. It is

connected to the Empty Quarter desert to the west and the central region in the south (Almaskiri, A. 2008, P 120-121). *Ad Dahirah* is an area rich in natural resources such as marble (see Figure 490) and it has a large number of oil and gas production fields (Althaqafa, W. A. w. 2002, P 77).

Ad Dahirah consists of three states: *Ibri*, *Dhank* and *Al Wasil*.

The administrative centre of the governorate is *Ibri*.



Figure 490 Mqabir wadi Al Einan (Ibri) grave © Khalid Al Busaidi

Governorate of *Al Wusta*

Al Wusta is in the centre of the country. It is located in the southern regions of the *Ad Dakhliyah* and *Ad Dahirah* governorates and situated to the east of the Arabian Sea (see Figure 491) and in the west desert of the Empty Quarter. It is south of the *Dhofar* governorate. It occupies a large area of central Oman. It is also characterised by the presence of a large number of oil and gas fields in its territory (Aleilam, W. 2014, P 64-65).

Al Wusta consists of four states: *Hima*, *Mahout*, *Al Duqm* and *Al Jazer*.

The administrative centre of the governorate is *Hima*.



Figure 491 Al Duqm beach © Khalid Al Busaidi

History

Oman since *Al Nabahina* rule till modern day

The recorded history of Oman spans over 13 centuries. It is not relevant to recall this entire history in this thesis; instead the research has focussed on contexts most relevant to the thesis topic. Accordingly, the periods of modern history immediately preceding the current reign of His Majesty *Sultan Qaboos bin Said* from (1970 till now), specifically the *Al Nabahina* (1154 till 1624), *Al Ya'ariba* (1624 till 1741) and *Al Busaid* (1744) dynasties, have been reviewed (Albusaidi, S. 2012, P 3).

The researcher has tried to clarify the main characteristics of each of these periods in a concise manner to identify the aspects of ancient history and cultural character of the Sultanate of Oman relevant to this research.

1. The rule of *Al Nabahina* in Oman

The rule of the *Al Nabahina* in Oman spanned almost (350) three hundred and fifty years, and what distinguishes this period of the history of Oman is that it stands as the most obscure periods due to lack of records. Omani historians generally agree that the rule of the *Al Nabahina* can be divided into two periods:

The first period from (1154 till 1500), is known as the early *Al Nabahina* period and lasted three hundred and fifty years. It underwent phases of the strengths and weaknesses because of internal conflict. Invasions by external forces permeated this period and wars faced *Al Nabahina* at home and abroad along with the inauguration of the imams from time to time (Himsi, I. 1997, P 70).

The second period from (1500 till 1624), is known as the late *Al Nabahina* period and lasted almost a hundred years, punctuated by various events, including the inauguration of the imams and the power struggle between the *Al Nabahina* themselves on the one hand and among some tribes of Oman ambitious in reaching the rule of Oman on the other hand. This period also saw harsh conditions in the form of the invasion of the Persians from *Sohar*

in the growing war between the tribes, and the entry of outside parties in the conflicts which led to a widening of the size of the conflicts between the tribes of Oman which is why in the end the Portuguese entered the field.

The last period of the rule of *Al Nabahina* can be described as a dark period in Omani history. Scientists suffered persecution. Books were burned. Religious and educational activities were curtailed. Laws were removed and chaos spread. Property and land were confiscated (Badawi, Y. 2008, P 41).

The characteristics of the of *Al Nabahina* era

The *Al Nabahina* represented a purely political system. They tended to live the life of luxury. They built themselves castles and forts to be impregnable and repel external attacks by their competitors. Ongoing conflicts and constant competition for power characterised their reign, whether among themselves or between them and the imams. Although it was described as the *Al Nabahina* era of the ruling family or city-states, there was nonetheless no strong central government to impose itself on the whole country.

The era of *Al Nabahina* may be considered a dark epoch in the history of Oman but it was not the case in another area dominated by *Al Nabahina*. The kingdom of Pat, which was located in the archipelago of Lamu on the coast of Africa, was a centre of civilization, science and culture, spread Islam among many Africans and established relations with the dominant populations of the region, whether on the coast or at home. Thus the *Al Nabahina* had a big role in linking Oman and east Africa to have strong ties and consolidation, which shows in the effect of Omani and African trade in goods imported there. Omanis are important to them in their daily lives, such as spices, textiles, and some special materials that go into the manufacture of some parts of the khanjar such as leather of various types, rhino horns and elephant tusks (Alsabagh, A. 1993, P 45).

The *Al Nabahina* era began deteriorating with the spread of civil wars. The deteriorating economic and social life contributed to the Portuguese invasion

which completed this deterioration with the arrival, where they burned the cities and destroyed ships moored in the port of Oman.

The *Al Nabahina* era began to crumble when the prestige of the rulers began to crumble. Since harmony and homogeneity among the elements of the community is the basis for a constructive force in the history of *Al Nabahina*, we find some great Imams became community referees who made their reign in the state characterized by force and rigidity (Gabash, H. 2006, P 88).

2. The rule of *Al Ya'ariba* in Oman

The State of *Al Ya'ariba* lasted for nearly one hundred and fifty years started from (1624 till 1741), and Oman witnessed for the first time in hundreds of years the unification of internal and coastal areas under the *Al Ya'ariba* imams. It also got rid of Portuguese limitations in their power, and was truly the first Arab state to be free of their influence. Thus began the State's movement toward expanding the political and economic influence of external verification in the era of *Al Busaid* family rulers following *Al Ya'ariba*, a family of *Al Busaid* (Alkharosi, S. 2000, P 53).

The struggle of *Al Ya'ariba* – particularly as it related to the ridding of Portuguese control at various stages – provided this State with safety and tranquillity. Their efforts to unite the country and adapt the tribes to them were significant accomplishments that helped to expand the influence of the State on the shores of the Indian Ocean and eastern Africa.

This expansion had an effect on the exchange of certain lifestyles and influenced cultures. An example of the spread this effect on food and clothing was the turban imported from India. The white sails of Omani ships (see Figure 492) printed with the slogan (swords and Khanjar) (see Figure 493) were actually manufactured in India.



Figure 492 An old Omani ship © National Geographic Magazine 1982

Figure 493 Indian workers make the ship's sail and paint the Omani logo © National Geographic Magazine 1982

In addition to the importation of sandalwood and bitter orange wood, which were required to manufacture the handles of the khanjar, this expansion also impacted on some of the inscriptions or patterns of Omani khanjar. Anyone interested in the research or in-depth study of the Omani Khanjar will notice one characteristic pattern resembling the eye or tear of the eye, which appears on the khanjar belt and scabbard cover (see Figure 496) Khanjar makers knew this kind of pattern by several names such as deer eye, and the appearance of this design is due to the type of mango fruit in India, which is called (Kairi or mango) in India (see Figure 495). This pattern can be seen on textiles worn by Indian women or in Indian temples. This pattern is still characteristic in Indian dress, and it has had a significant impact on several peoples, including the Arab peoples and Europeans at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Figure 494)



Figure 494 The path of the Omani commercial ships © National Geographic Magazine 1982



Figure 495 The design on the khanjar belt © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 496 The designs found on the scabbard cover © Khalid Al Busaidi

The characteristics of the *Al Ya'ariba* era

Perhaps the most important achievement of the *Al Ya'ariba* era was good in terms of security, stability and prosperity. It also marked the evolution of the massive but outdated Navy of Oman.

The Omani historian *Humaid bin Zureiq* describes the period of prosperity during the reign of *Imam Sultan bin Saif*, *Imams of Al Ya'ariba* as follows:

"Oman has flourished at that time, and rested the peoples in that time, has licensed the price, and become easy to travel, also become better trade and easy to find food" (Alsabagh, A. 1993 P, 185). *Humaid bin Zureiq* also researched the development of this Imam at the Omani Navy whose practices were adopted in turn by the most imams later, and resulted in the Omani fleet of Navy ships being equipped with the big cannons like many European ships to become an even stronger Omani Navy fleet of warships in the Indian Ocean. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, *Al Ya'ariba* political influence on the State stretched from the Gulf to the coast of East Africa and its economic influence extended from the banks of the Gulf to Iran, Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula and the Lakes region in Central Africa (Badawi, Y. 2008, P 196).

3. The rule of *Al Busaid* in Oman

In the midst of difficult circumstances, Omani reformers began looking and thinking of a strong personality firm to be relied upon to protect the country, and found that in *Ahmed bin Said* – Governor of *Sohar* – who excelled in the face of the Persians to be an *Imam* to Oman. Under his leadership, strife vanished along with conflicts and civil wars that had erupted at the end of *Al Ya'ariba* rule and started from (1744). He also had control over all the castles and forts in the country (see Figure 497). He himself selected the rulers and ruled the country with a strong hand, which enabled him to eliminate the corruption that had been in the country (Abdulhussain, F. 1995, P 144).

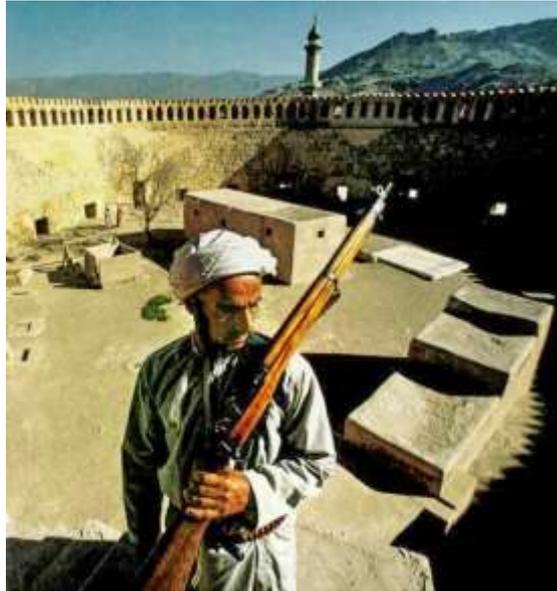


Figure497 Guard and warrior in Nizwa fort © National Geographic Magazine 1981

At that time, Oman established a new historical era that had taken Oman to stability and unity and prosperity, which in turn prompted the Omanis to go about rebuilding and repairing what had been destroyed and started trends towards greater civilisation achievements, both internal and external, which continued to impact during the subsequent time period.

The re-building of the armed forces were in proportion and scale to the challenges that were faced with Oman at the time, and along with the rebuilding of the Navy and commercial fleet, we can say that if the state of *Al Ya'ariba* has been described as a state of naval warfare, it is appropriate to describe the *Al Busaid* as a state of military maritime commerce.

As a result of this progress in commercial and maritime development, European countries were keen to establish trade agencies in the cities of Oman.

The characteristics of the *Al Busaid* era

The *Al Busaid* era was characterised by a lot of achievements, including the internal administrative organisation that is made up of the legislature, the judiciary and the executive, which in turn is in the finance house or department of finance and the governors and police and private security guards and the army and fleet. There was also interest in developing the

army for the protection of Oman and its regions and maintaining its position by means of a regular army with advanced combat capabilities (see Figure 498). There was also interest in developing the fleet in order to maintain trade and the protection of coastal areas (Abdulhussain, F. 1995, P 148).



Figure 498 Omani business ship © National Geographic Magazine 1982

As a result of the security and order, trade boomed in the *Al Busaid* era where markets flourished and the resources of Omani and foreign goods multiplied. Maritime trade flourished in the presence of a military fleet scouring the seas and oceans. The warships operating in the transport of goods during peacetime increased the efficiency of the Omani ports.

Omani ports became famous for the export and import of goods. Among the most famous of those goods were elephant tusks and rhino horns, which were used by the Omanis in the Omani Khanjar handle-making industry. The finest horns were imported from East Africa especially from Zanzibar and Kenya, and neighbouring countries were keen on importing them through the ports in Oman because they were used in ornaments for females and some types of furniture or decoration of houses. At the present time, these horns have become universally prohibited from trafficking. Consequently, other materials are being used as substitutes to make Khanjar handles including wood (bitter orange wood and sandalwood), marble and plastic.

The revival of agriculture in Oman under the State's stability and security started to see the production of crops in a variety of different climate zones in Oman.

Many industries from a variety of differing regions of the Sultanate flourished including shipbuilding, textiles, copper, incense, pottery, leather and silverware such as ornaments for females and the Omani khanjar that men at that time were keen to wear as a sign of prestige and to complement the Omani uniform comprising the long cloth (*Dishdasha*), a turban and the Omani khanjar. At that time, Oman gave attention to scientists and the *Al Busaid* era was one of great cultural renaissance.

The influence of Omani culture in the east of Africa began in the reign of Said bin Sultan in 1804, which formed the pillars of civilization by means of cultural and civilizational influence. The *Al Busaid* ruler hired in East Africa a large number of consultants and scientists from all fields. They succeeded in collecting the various Arab tribes in East Africa and with the participation of tribal leaders they consulted about the functions of the state and its problems either in Oman or in Zanzibar. As a result of this cultural transfer to the people of East Africa (see Figure 499), especially in terms of wearing the Omani dagger and adopting Omani industry, they became involved in African industries, activities and social life (Himsi, I. 1997, P 203).



Figure499 Omani khanjar makers in Zanzibar © National Geographic Magazine 1952

Because of the *Al Busaid* rulers, the African community started to become familiar with councils held by the rulers to get to know the problems of the

nearby parish and to hear community opinion in regard to the interests of everyone (see Figure 500).

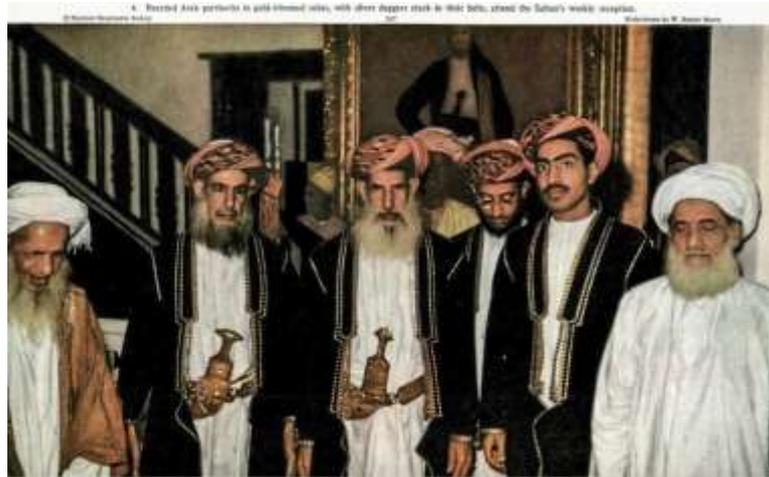


Figure 500 The rulers of Al busaidi in Zanzibar © National Geographic Magazine 1952

The rule of Sultan Qaboos bin Said

The rule of *Sultan Qaboos* is an extension of the State of *Al Busaid* start from (1970) till this day. Under the leadership of his Majesty *Sultan Qaboos bin Said*, the Sultanate of Oman managed to reach the ranks of developed countries, including the renaissance and the development of various fields and sectors. On 23rd July 1970, which was a glorious day in the history of Oman, the commander declared that Oman today is not like the past because it has changed her face pale and shaken off the dust of her isolation and stagnation and kicked off to open its doors and windows to a new light. “Oman today is different than before, it has changed the face pale and shaken off the dust of the isolation and began to open its doors and windows for a new light, Oman today boast of neighbour Arab countries and around the world, the progress and prosperity. The leader (see Figure 501) promised his people “Dear people, I will work as fast as I can to make you happy to live a better future” (Alqasmi, K. 1993, P 58).



Figure 501 The dress of the royal family and Sultan Qaboos at the beginning of his rule © National Geographic Magazine 1973

The characteristics of the *Sultan Qaboos bin Said* era

His Majesty *Sultan Qaboos* managed to overcome most of the obstacles and difficulties. He created a modern government with all its institutions and facilities to meet all the requirements of rapid development in the interest of the country. Policies were chosen by consensus and understanding between the ruling and the ruled in order to consolidate national unity and foster a spirit of cooperation between everyone. His Majesty established how all the officials in his government would serve the people and the country and they would have to perform this service wholeheartedly. *Sultan Qaboos* ordered the formation of the political and administrative apparatus of the state (Hussain, M. 2012, P 73).

Keen Since taking rule, *Sultan Qaboos* of Oman has been keen on restoring contact with the outside world, including most of the countries of the world and confirming its Arab affiliation.

Since taking the reins, Oman has become a country focussed on both Arab and international engagement and committed to foreign policy principles that abide by good neighbourliness and non-interference in internal affairs and respect for the laws and norms of international law and the establishment of friendly relations with all friendly countries (Bader, M. 2009, P 62).

The sultan has paid special attention to building the armed forces as the basis of a modern nation. Evidence of the level reached by Omani and its stature in terms of preparing, arming and development can be seen in the Command and Staff College of the Royal Army, the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Guard of Oman. The commander realised from the first moment that in order to move towards the desired objectives to achieve well-being and stability of the society, security and safety must be provided. He ordered the establishment of a Royal Police of Oman, and won the confidence of Omani citizens.

The *Sultan Qaboos* was keen to promote Oman's economic development. He introduced a series of five-year plans starting in 1970. From the first five-year plan to the ninth, each plan aimed at a group of developmental projects and various services (AlRaghi, H. 2012, P 39).

The *Sultan Qaboos* cared about the heritage and symbols of identity in Oman. His Majesty said, "We are proud of our country's cultural identity in our journey to making progress and prosperity, we would like to commend all the attention to the need for citizens to demand traditional occupations on which our past, such as the professions of agriculture, fishing, and other skills and crafts as they have all of the utmost importance in the development of the economies of the country, so as not to lose and neglect of good resources blessed us by god" speech of His Majesty *Sultan Qaboos bin Said* on the occasion of the sixteenth National Day (Badawi, Y. 2008, P 277).

The Sultanate has a clear interest in developing these resources. Varied governmental institutions have been set up to deal with the development of these resources such as livestock, agriculture, fisheries and marine life. His Majesty has also encouraged traditional occupations such as the manufacturing of pottery, textiles and silverware of various kinds including the Omani Khanjar as an "Omani symbol". The Government of the Sultanate is one of the rare countries that have maintained their heritage and ancient symbols of civilization. In celebration of Oman's seventeenth anniversary of the National Day, His Majesty gave craftsmen an assurance of the adherence to authenticity rights in Oman as well as sponsorship and

personal care for workers. His role as the state sponsor of Omani rights that looks to the future at the same time was stressed.

His Majesty gave more attention to education in the Sultanate. The established principles emphasise free education and equal opportunities. The tremendous development of education in the Sultanate during the past years was achieved through a series of stages associated with five-year development plans. Higher education universities and colleges were also established.

The new government has shown interest in health care. Attention was accorded to health care in hospitals, clinics and health care centres. Hospitals varied their specialties. The health sector has achieved remarkable development during the five-year development plans.

The Sultanate's government focused on public services necessary for Omani citizens. There was widespread development of the transport sector, which resulted in the paving of roads and establishment of ports, airports and meteorological stations. The official administrative bodies of the government are the regional municipalities, which provide direct contact between the government and citizens in the country.

City beautification is one of the most important activities of the regional municipalities. The Muscat Municipality had more work on it because it represents the capital of Oman.

The Muscat Municipality is keen on developing the beauty of Muscat while maintaining the character of civilization of the Sultanate. Visitors will notice representative of the symbols of civilization such as silverware and pottery on roads and in government institutions alike. They may also find the Omani Khanjar the identification symbol of Oman standing tall in the streets and roads, as the government is keen to maintain Omani design that distinguishes Arab and Islamic character (see Figure 502).



Figure 502. The beauty of the streets in Oman and the slogan of the country (swords and Khanjar) © Khalid Al Busaidi

Appendix 2

Traditional arts

Omani traditional arts

In the course of my fieldwork I recorded many occasions where the wearing of the khanjar was integral to the success of traditional celebrations. This appendix records this phenomenon and can be seen as developing the context in which my research into the manufacture of the khanjar took place. Omani traditional arts are a record of the life of the people of Oman. They represent and visualise the life of the Omanis, both in their day to day way of living and celebrating different occasions as methods for expressing their feelings and thinking, which appear in the traditional arts performed. Traditional arts do not stem from a vacuum, but result from the interaction between individuals and groups as well as the effect of the environment around them during different time periods. The performing arts are part of the customs and traditions of Omani society (see Figure 503 and 504).

By watching these performances, one will note the Omani pride in traditional costumes. Male performers wear the Omani turban, dishdasha and khanjar, and hold a sword with shield, and sometimes guns. In addition, one will see female performers wearing different costumes from different provinces and jewellery in the form of gold or silver ornaments.

There is diversity in the traditional arts in Oman. Some of the traditional arts famous in the various governorates of the Sultanate and the different environments will be addressed in this appendix. Omanis are proud of these traditional arts, which are still dedicated to studies and searched and documented. They are also still practiced as rituals on different religious occasions, social events, national day, and performed by some for fun and entertainment.



Figure 503 Omani men wear khanjars during traditional celebrations © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 504 Omani men wear khanjars during traditional celebrations © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Razha

Al Razha is the oldest traditional arts celebration in the Sultanate of Oman and is as old as Oman. *Al Razha* is famous in a wide geographical area of Oman and practised in many of the provinces and states of the Sultanate except the southern region. It is the art of swordplay and poetry among the top poets. The wearing of Omani uniforms is required along with the khanjar for added relevance, as is carrying the sword and shield ostentatiously.

Al Razha is a way to express the collective joy of people and is held on special occasions, weddings and holidays (*Eid Al-Fitr* and *Eid Al-Adha*) for fun and recreation. Alternately it is also a way to declare war and mobilise fighters and to declare victory. At present some provinces perform *Al Razha* at weddings, social events and national day to express joy or to maintain Oman's heritage at official functions (see Figure 505 and 506).

The different types of *Al Razha* vary according to the sequence of its technical performance such as: *Al Hubal*, *Al Qasafi* and *Lal Al Oud* (Alealam, 1995, p. 64).



Figure 505 Omani men hold sword and wearing khanjar in Al Razha dance © Khalid Al Busaidi

Figure 506 Omani men hold sword and wearing khanjar in Al Razha dance © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Azi

Al Azi is the traditional Omani art practised in all governorates of the Sultanate, without exception. It is the art of pride and praise and poetry recitation. *Al Azi* is also the name given to the man who is the champion poet. The *Al Azi* is treasured and his family and relatives or clan take pride in him. He usually performs poems in worship of God, morals and grandparents, and in praise of His Majesty the Sultan.

Al Azi is a performance based on the poet's poetic diction, good voice and ability to perform impressively. All the participants in the art of *Al Azi* stand in a large circle and wear the Omani *khanjar* (see Figure 507 and 508). The poet stands in front of them with his sword in his right hand and shield in the left hand. He walks in front of them and recites the poem proudly and shakes his sword at every stop (at the end of each verse) (see Figure 509 and 510). The rest of the group repeat several cheers (*Waslemt, Almouk Lillah Ydoom, Sebian ya Kebar Al Sheiam*). The *Al Azi* performance is inked with the *Al Razha* performance. Wherever *Al Razha* is held, *Al Azi* is also held (Alshidi, 2008, p 70).



Figure 507 Omani men hold sword with shield and wearing khanjar in Al Azi dance © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 508 Omani men throw their sword in Al Azi dance © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 509 Omani mans holding guns in Al Azi dance © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 510 Omani men demonstrating war fights in Al Azi dance © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Tariq

Al Tariq means 'the melodious tune' and it is the art of leading occasions without musical instruments. It takes the form of Badwen vocals that are individually performed and repeated in association (one or more), while riding on camels. One performer starts singing first and then the other person or persons repeat the verse sung by the first singer until the poem is finished. The tune in *Al Tariq* is constant and does not change from one singer to another or from state to state within the Sultanate. The varied themes of poetry in *Al Tariq* may include sweet memories, praise for the tribe and its men or in praise for the camel and their virtues (see Figure 511). The performer would put on his Omani dishdasha and wear on his waist the Omani khanjar

with pride, thus completing the final form of the art of the singer (Alealam, 1995, p 86).



Figure 511 Omani man ridding camel in the desert © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Wana

Al Wana is a Badwen performance performed by groups (men and women) sitting in front of their tents or around a fire. *Al Wana* is a song that has its origins with long distance camel travel, where the rider would sing a traditional song to keep him awake.

Al Wana is the art of memories as it is sometimes called. The singer puts his hands on the cheek while leaning on his cane and closes his eyes during the performance, which is usually characterised by grief, especially when it is the poetry of memories.

The singer starts to sing first line of the first poem and others then repeat the same line with the same melody, and so on with the rest of the verses of the poem, till the poem ends (Alealam, 1995, p 88).

Badwen are usually wearing the *khanjar* in their councils, including session's recreational activities and various arts (see Figure 512 and 513).



Figure 512 Omani man sitting with his camel in the desert © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 513 Omani man in front of his tent © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Tagrood

Al Tagrood is a Badwen art characterised by the appearance of horses or camels. A horse *Tagrood* is different to a camel *Tagrood*. A horse *Tagrood* is aimed at rallying horses and riders and peppered with shouts to increase their enthusiasm (see Figure 514). A horse *Tagrood* aims to boost courage, bravery and gallantry and also to rescue the weak and praise horses acquired by the horse breeders. In order to create a more spirited atmosphere keen performers wear the *khanjar*.

When *Al Hambel* is addressed in *Al Tagrood* art, one will hear about the camel *Tagrood*. It is performed by one man, or a group of men, who while travelling, may sit on the lead camel and sing. This practice differs across different provinces and States but it is done without the use of musical instruments (Alealam, 1995, p 88).



Figure 514 Omani men riding horses and singing © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Habot (Al Medan)

Al Habot is a traditional musical style played by men on the occasion of weddings, social events, and various tribal and national official celebrations, as well as celebrations in regional areas the such as *Habot Al Badia*, *Habot Al Gabal* and *Habot Al Moden*.

This performance is performed without the use of musical instruments and performers wear the best types of dress, swords, Omani *khanjar*, guns and sticks, led in the front row by sword players (sword dancers).

Al Habot is one of the most popular arts in the southern region. It is based on poetry and poetic banter between the poet and one other. Topics may refer to praise, pride, wisdom, advice or a private issue between two people or between two tribes. *Al Habot* poetry is an inherited folk art. Tribal *Al Habot* is significant to the population of *Dhofar*. *Al Habot* art acts as a core to all the historical issues of the Omani society in *Dhofar*.

Al Habot vocals are collectively organised. Performers are organised by rank in consecutive rows. The first row is made up of the poets and the Senate and the senior men of the tribe, followed by the rest of the participants and the general tribe members. Eager men in the first row wear the full uniform including the turban and *khanjar*. The dancers wear a special black dress called *Al Sabekha*, which is a common dress of mountain residents. These dancers have lengthened hair and take pride in the past. Hair would thus be

bound by leather of about half a meter in length called *mahfif* and the binding of it is one of the women's handcraft.

Al Habot combines different types of dance and is a symbol of manhood, strength and magnanimity. It is similar to running leaps punctuated by strong actions with the sword. The dancer may jump several consecutive jumps while beating a sword sheath or sticks that dancer put on their arms during the dance. The dancer may fire his gun between each song in greeting, encouragement or admiration for the other dancers (see Figure 515).



Figure 515 Omani man holding sword and dance © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Rabobah

Al Rabobah is a musical performance and is traditionally performed by men and women together as a team consisting of several dancers (male and female), one male singer and other female singers to repeat the song, and performers of musical instruments. Female dancers wear *Dofari* dress, authentic ornaments and various jewellery, while male dancers dress in a turban and dishdasha with a preference for showing a "loincloth" underneath (that makes it easier for them to move during the dance) and the khanjar on top of that. Percussion instruments are usually used including different types of drums. *Rababah*, which is its Arabic name, is a string instrument played with a bow (see Figure 516) that has a low range but plays long, harmonically rich notes (Althaqafa, 2012, p. 25).

Al Rabobah performance is traditionally from the Dofar reign and performed in the cities of *Salalah*, *Mirbat* and *Taqa*. *Al Rabobah* is performed in social events and religious holidays and national day events. It is also held with the

aim of recreation or fun. This art is named after the *Rababah* instrument, which has a single string called *Watir*. *Al Rababah* comprises overlapping dance movements between women and men. It requires great precision and training to highlight the aesthetics of this art, which is done in a line-up of four or more dancers. Men are matched with the same number of women, who gracefully and repeatedly cross each other's paths, always remaining separate. While the dancers are performing during *Al Rababah*, other women sit behind the singer and repeat the song while clapping so as to complete the rhythmic beauty and lyrical quality of the performance.



Figure 516 Omani man playing music © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Madar

Al Madar is traditionally performed in *Dhofar* by men and women. This is done two ways depending on the type of event. The first way involves a big number of people led by men wearing uniforms and a *khanjar*, and carrying swords and sticks, followed by women wearing jewellery like silver or gold, as well as musical percussion.

The second way to perform *Al Madar* is lining up men and women opposite to one another flanked by the ranks of musicians and musical instruments.

Al Madar is performed in national events and social just like any other types of art (see Figure 517 and 518).



Figure 517 Omani man playing music © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 518 Omani man playing music © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Bara'a

Al Bara'a performance is practised in the states of *Dhofar* and in some states of the East (*Sur, Jalan Bani Bu Ali*). *Al Bara'a* comprises one dancer or two dancers at the same time, and the attendant art focuses on repeating the song (done by women) accompanied by percussion instruments (drums) and some wind instruments. *Al Bara'a* art differs from the rest of the arts in the southern region, where the configuration of the movement differs, and they do not use poems.

Al Bara'a art starts with two dancers who progress by leading the band (they are wearing the turban, the khanjar, and a *shal* that wraps around the khanjar in a specific manner recognisable among the Omanis). When the band starts singing the dancers stand to start dancing to the tunes. The movement in *Al Bara'a* is in the form of a strong jump performed by the two men together, holding each of the two blades of the khanjar in their right hands while keeping in harmony with the rhythms of the music. The left hand holds the dishdasha at the waist steadily while performing the dance movement (see Figure 519). One foot rises off the ground a certain distance move the two dancers articulate the movement of harmony and lightness by progressing

forward together and then going back to back while dancing in front of the band members and singing and setting the tempo.

Al Bara'a is practised by men only. Women are not involving in the dancing; their participation is limited to responding to the singer (Alkathiri, 2002, p 44).



Figure 519 Omani man and women dancing in Al Bara'a © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Razfah

Al Razfah art is traditionally performed by the Badwen men in all governorates of the Sultanate. Women do not participate in all of the states. It is one of the performances that do not use musical instruments except in the *Musandam* state which uses different type drums made of leather known as *Al Rahmani* and *Al Khaser*. Two lines of men face each other, and ritually celebrate traditional poetry by reciting it backwards and forwards between one another in repetitive sequences.

Al Razfah art is characterised by the nature of the movements performed by the men. Two lines face each other, opposite partners holding opposing ends of a stick, sword or gun. One man in the group sings, and the others then repeat the line after him shaking their heads in tune with the rhythm of the song. They move the upper part of the body or may put the sticks on their shoulders and repeat the earlier movements. The dancers roam in the space between rows, each carrying his sword or a gun or unsheathed khanjar blade, which represents the courage and skill in their weapons or martial art. Someone may show his skill by throwing his sword or rifle up and then grasping it lightly again before falling on to the ground. It is one of the skills

that are the pride of the Omani dances. Alternately, someone lifts his rifle aloft and his hands move with lightness and a circular motion so that rifle circles are completed in the air for a long period of time without the rifle falling out of his hand (see Figure 520).

There are also other weapon-based activities. The *Al Razfah* poem has several topics including wisdom, praise and memory (Alshidi, 2005, p. 57).



Figure 520 Omani men heating drums in Al Razfah dance © Khalid Al Busaidi

Al Hambal or Al Maserah

Al Hambal is performed on horseback or camels. A horse *Hambal* involves men singing on horseback while participating in a social event, or greeting and walking normally. This is a new performance in national events. It is held in most states of the Sultanate and the men are always be careful with their appearance during riding - especially those in the front row - and carry the khanjar and bamboo sticks.

This art is performed without musical instruments. There is a total reliance on the poets to sing in a unified tune. *Al Hambal* art is used in the glorification of the horse, enumerating the beauty; pride and courage of those on horseback (see Figure 521).

A camel *Hambal* is similar to a horse *Hambal*. Singings is traditionally done by Badwens when riding their camels while travelling or marching as individuals or in groups as they cut across the distances in the desert (see

Figure 522). It may also function as entertainment or social events and is often used to revive heritage in national events (Alealam, 1995, p 66).



Figure 521 Omani men riding horse © Khalid Al Busaidi



Figure 522 Omani men holding camel © Khalid Al Busaidi

Storing and cleaning the khanjar

Storing the khanjar is a very important topic that should not be overlooked by the owner or seller of the khanjars, especially at this time, given that many of Omanis only wear it only on special occasions, and leave it in storage for a long time. Poor storage and maintenance will result in needing to return it to khanjar makers for repair or cleaning.

Correct storage leads to less need for maintenance over the long term. In this way, the khanjar only needs occasional maintenance between generations, which ensures families can retain this ancient and inherited symbol of Oman as a part of their family identity.

The method for storing the khanjar does not require much effort. To protect the khanjar from damage the owner should:

- Wrap the belt around the khanjar (see Figure 523).



Figure 523 The belt is wrapped round the khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- The khanjar is wrapped with a large soft cloth to cover its entire length and is placed inside a cloth bag (see Figure 524 and 525).



Figure 524 Soft cloth bag © Khalid Al Busaidi

Figure 525 The wrapped khanjar © Khalid Al Busaidi

- The wrapped khanjar is placed inside a padded wooden box. The khanjar is tied into place with yarns installed on the edge of the wooden box from the inside to ensure the stability of the khanjar and to secure it when one moves it around. Some of the wooden boxes may be provided with an external lock (see Figure 526).



Figure 526 Place the khanjar inside a wooden box © Khalid Al Busaidi

Cleaning the khanjar

Cleaning the khanjar is as important as storing it in the right way; the khanjar needs periodic cleaning, which contributes to the maintenance of the shine of its primary parts, as well as the main secondary parts. Traditionally khanjar owners did all their own maintenance however this skill is becoming lost and has now become part of the service offered by khanjar makers.

Cleaning the khanjar in the traditional way

Cleaning the khanjar is done using the dried Tung fruit (*ritah*). The dried fruits are heated in hot water and then soaked. The pulp is then applied to the silver components of the khanjar with palm fibre, and rubbed softly until they sparkle. In the final stage the same parts are cleaned with a soft cloth and water and exposed to the open air till it dries, then the khanjar is stored in its box in the right way.

Cleaning the khanjar is also done using fine sand. Fine sand is mixed with a little water to form a smooth mixture for cleaning and applied using palm fibre. This mixture is normally used in cleaning the blade of the khanjar, but it can be used to clean the other parts if *ritah* is not available (or if the Khanjar makers prefer to use this method).

Cleaning the khanjar in the modern way

Dried Tung fruit is still the favourite item for cleaning the khanjar. However it is now applied with a brush instead of palm fibre. *Ritah* is also used in cleaning the ferrule, scabbard upper cover, and chape. If the handle is made of silver, then it is cleaned using a rough brush.

Cleaning is done using soap. Soap powder is used with a little water to clean the scabbard cover and the belt using a soft brush. Usually this method is used in cleaning the scabbard cover and belt only. It is cleaned with a cloth moistened with water and then exposed to the open air, and finally stored in the right way within its box.

Cleaning is done using battery acid liquid. Recycled battery acid liquid is used for cleaning the silver may be available in the local market or at the khanjar makers. It is used for cleaning the silver parts with a soft brush focussing on the ferrule, scabbard upper cover, and chape, or if the handle is made of silver, this liquid gives the silver the highest shine in a shorter time than other traditional materials.

Learning the craft of making the Omani khanjar

The Omani khanjar industry is an ancient craft. It has ancient foundations and principles, and it is rooted in heritage through the centuries. The tie is strong and deep linking Omani identity to authentic symbols and treasures.

The following story is the realisation of this craft which illustrates how each craftsman learns the khanjar craft industry, and how these experiences leave a distinctive mark in the Omani khanjar industry. The modern history of Oman is characterised by modernity and sophistication along with pride and identity in an ancient civilization.

This is a story that combines the rich history of Oman and the novelty of its modern history. The story combines the challenges of old times and the challenges of modern times. The story may be different in some of the events between the two times, but they share the Omani characters who are dignified in practising their customs and traditions and eager to embody these refined habits.

This story takes place somewhere in Oman. It is the story of a child named "Mohammed", who was five-years old, lived in a small village with his family. Mohammed woke up every day with an innocent and optimistic smile. Full of vitality and enthusiasm, he always ate his breakfast in a hurry, and walked to work with his father.

Every day he accompanied his father (also named Mohammed) to his workshop, which he had inherited from his father and other members of his family. Mohammed's father worked very hard in the khanjar craft industry to provide for the livelihood of his family. He manufactured and sold Omani khanjars. In this simple workshop built of mud Mohammed carefully watched the various steps and actions of his father. He wished to engage in this profession in the future as it has done previously since the time of his father's ancestors. He would always be found between family members telling them about the details of his day with his father at his workplace, or among his friends and his companions in a school to learn the Koran, which are known locally as *Kitateeb* (Koran schools), which organised the day to memorise the

Koran and learn the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. He was keen to transfer the aesthetic that touched his heart before his mind.

When Mohammed was six years old, he had learned a lot from his father and he could guess the name of the tools and materials needed for the manufacture of each part of the khanjar. Over the days and nights, he became an assistant to his father and learned the craft and the foundations of all the basic requirements.

Mohammed continued to develop a passion and love for the craft the Khanjar industry under the guidance of his father until he was eight years old. He started to fix some of the pieces and parts in small Khanjars with the help of his father. Some of the pieces were installed under the guidance of simple direct verbal instructions.

When Mohammed was eleven-years-old, his family talked with pride about his career and future job prospects with confidence. He could give details of the steps for making all the different pieces of the khanjar. This little boy was able to manufacture the pieces and parts of various small khanjars himself with the supervision and guidance of his father. He became an assistant to his father, which relieved him of the time and effort required for the manufacture of the khanjar, by that time his father gave him some of the tools for him to use it, and some of the tools such as: Stamps, embossing swages, molds and dies are handed down over generations.

Four years after that Mohammed became a young man at the age of fifteen who accompanied his father to work and councils on different occasions. His father was proud of him and talked to him about the profession. He was able to manufacture the Omani khanjar without the direct supervision, and wished to leave his own mark in this craft like his father and his grandfather before him.

When he was seventeen Mohammed succeeded his father at his place of work. Mohammed recalled the days of his childhood and the beginning of his craft until he became a young man and mastered the profession and made

the khanjar by himself. He hoped one day to leave his mark among the artisans like his father and his grandparents. This profession is not an easy one and there are a lot of difficulties and challenges. Each khanjar requires between one to three months. Moreover the owner of the khanjar may require particular specifications that warrant additional time and effort. There are also some materials that may not be available in the local market, which in turn requires diligence to search for them in the domestic market or to import them from overseas markets through the ports of Oman.

Mohammed's passion for his profession and his desire to learn and develop himself along with his experience in the khanjar industry was enough to leave a distinctive mark in the industry and among khanjar makers. By the age of twenty-two, he had mastered the requirements and challenges of this difficult craft securing his reputation among the Omani craftsmen. It became a source of pride for his family to bears the family name within the khanjar industry as inherited from father to son. He also became a popular point of contact for many of the khanjar owners and those who aspire to own Omani khanjars with particular specifications and high quality.

After a period of time, Mohammed married and had a small family. The khanjar craft industry was his source of livelihood. He then raised a child named "Ahmed", because the Omani khanjar craft is inherited within the family.

Ahmad began watching his father Mohammed since the age of eight in his spare time after the completion of the school day. The workshop had grown and saw the addition of some modifications and air conditioning, as well as storage for tools and materials and provision of some modern tools (manual and electric), which testifies to the time and effort put into making the pieces and different parts of the khanjar.

By the time Ahmad reached the third grade in school, he was a good student in school regularly who attended school on a daily basis. He was also keen to finish homework early so that he would have sufficient time for the rest of his day to spend with his father in his workshop. It was that he discovered tools

and different materials, because this had become his passion. His father showed him the operations in his spare time and demonstrated the use of tools and various materials as the first steps in learning the craft.

Ahmed practiced his hobby to learn the craft of making khanjar in his spare time over the years, up to age of twelve, putting together the installed pieces and some small parts of the khanjar under the direct guidance of his father Mohammed.

Ahmad's desire to learn the craft from his father increased although he is busy in his study. He had developed a passion and a love for learning this craft. By the age of sixteen he learned to follow the work and the accuracy of his father in the manufacture of the same parts.

Every day, as his father did previously, Ahmed spoke with his friends in the school how proud he was to learn this craft. He spoke with confidence about the details and the steps of the khanjar industry, as well as the challenges and difficulties faced in learning the craft such as not having enough time to be trained by his father because he is too busy studying.

When Mohammed watches his twenty-four-year-old son Ahmed as he tries to manufacture different parts of the khanjar, he remembers his own early beginnings in learning the craft and compares the beginnings of his son Ahmed and interest in learning the craft and the extent of his own eagerness to learn the craft from his father as a profession. There is a difference between them in terms of the use of hand tools and other modern tools that save a lot of time and effort, as well as the complete reordering in the way the craft is taught while preoccupied with other concerns. Ahmed is now employed by the government, which has led to a delay in learning the craft fully.

When he reached the age of twenty-six Ahmad was able to achieve success in the khanjar industry by himself without any significant intervention from his father. However Mohammed was proud of his son Ahmad for ensuring that he had sufficient time at the end of the week or in the holidays to help his

father in the manufacture of khanjars, especially when a large number had to be completed and delivered to their owners on time. Ahmed took care of this and his accuracy in completing the khanjars gained respect and pride in the profession of his father.

Ahmed hopes to transfer the interest and pride in the craft of khanjar to his children in the future, but there are several questions in his mind: Will he have enough time to teach his sons the craft? or will they enter one of the training centres with modern workshops that work on the training of future generations in accordance to the craft of the Public Authority for Craft Industries? Will his sons develop the same attention and passion to learn this ancient craft?

Appendix 3

Website

Website

Project Creation

I have created this website about the Omani khanjar because there is very little useful information about the Omani khanjar on the Internet. The majority of the population use the internet as a daily part of their lives as a source of information and communication. There is a concern that the younger generation are not giving the khanjar industry enough attention, and the khanjar will eventually be forgotten by them. It is increasingly important to create a website on khanjars, for the internet is an effective way of attracting young people. My user-friendly website provides useful information, and an appealing design was created to appeal not only to the Omani population, and everyone who wants to read about khanjars to increase their awareness.

Website

The creation of a Website has been chosen for three reasons:

- The internet has become one of the key resources for searching and retrieving information easily and speedily. It also allows others to share and exchange knowledge, point of views, ideas and suggestions. One of the reasons why most people are unaware about the existence of Omani khanjars is that there is only little useful information on the internet about them, especially in the English language, the most common language worldwide. By creating and publishing a website about the Omani khanjar, useful information about this culturally significant artefact will be made easily available for everyone, including fellow researchers and khanjar enthusiasts.
- In view of the fact that the younger generation are the more frequent users of the internet, I have created and published useful information on the internet for their access.
- Creating and publishing this website is one way of documenting vital information, such as recordings, detailed notes, and research material.

This information can then be passed on to readers to promote awareness.

Due to the above mentioned reasons and being one of Omani younger generation's designers, I decided to initiate a process of maintaining Omani heritage and sharing this with others. I used the skills that I had been equipped with through education, by collecting all possible information and documenting it in the creation of a website. The website will be the first extensive digital resource about the Omani khanjar, its history and its uses.

This website will be useful to the Omanis and to the rest of the world. In order to make this website more informative, the website should be well presented by being:

- Simple
- User friendly
- Creative
- Customizable
- Elegant
- Flexible
- Powerful

Strategy analysis

The internet is one of the most important sources of information globally, and in Oman; "through the e-Oman strategy, the Information Technology Authority has brokered cooperation among several stakeholders and established a multistage holder partnership involving private sector and civil society organizations to provide training and access to ICT". (*Oman's strategy for becoming a digital society*, 2013) Information can be sourced out by just a click of the button when using the search engines. The website has been designed as a reference site. For this reason a mobile app has not been developed as the amount of information in the site makes it appropriate for sustained study, rather than browsing.

User analysis

The envisaged users will be individuals of all ages and not only restricted to Omanis, hence its dual language mode. It is designed to be available to anyone interested about the Omani khanjar such as craftsmen, designers, historians, students, researcher, etc.

Content analysis

An introduction and site map will be provided to enable the readers to have a 'bird's eye view' of the website. A choice of two languages English and Arabic also will be offered to the readers. Its design will be eye-catching but simple, to attract readers to the website. Each page of the website will be of reasonable size so that uploading of the pages will be a painless process.

Technology analysis

HTML and PHP have been used since most users are familiar with that format and it will be easy for visitors to use and explore the website. It is also faster to be uploaded.

Structure of the website (see Figure 527).

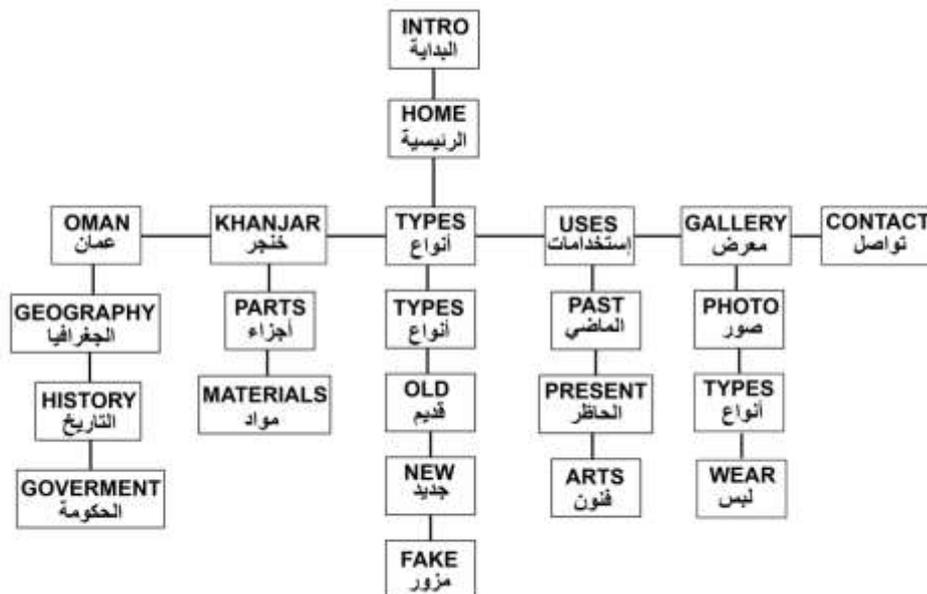


Figure 527 Website structure © Khalid Al Busaidi

The website contains information under the following headings:

- **Intro**
- **Home**
- **Oman** (Geography, History, and Government attention).
- **Khanjar** (Parts, and Materials).
- **Types** (Types, Ancient un-named, New khanjar, and Fake khanjar).
- **Uses** (Past, Present, and Art).
- **Gallery** (Photos, Types, and Wear).
- **Contact.**

The website can be accessed at <http://www.khanjar.om/>

Pages of the website

Intro

This page is where the user decides what language to use to enter the website. The visual theme of the introductory page is to give the user a basic idea of what the website is about. There are a few images of the Omani khanjar. The footer of the website shows visual motifs of Oman (see Figure 528).



Figure 528 Website intro page © Khalid Al Busaidi

Home

Home page gives the user basic information about the khanjar. From the home page the user will be able to see the menu and follow it through the website (see Figure 529).



Figure 529 Website home page English © Khalid Al Busaidi

Oman

Information about Oman in this website is very important because it helps the reader to understand the geography and history of Oman, also the government attention on Omani khanjar. Readers will be able to realise the importance of khanjar to the country when they notice that the khanjar along with two crossing swords is represented on the Oman flag. This section contains information relevant to understanding the cultural and national background to the history of Oman, including information, such as the location of Oman on the world map, its population, national language, along with images of some historical places, are also included in this segment to enable a better understanding of Oman.

The Sultan of Oman and its government has announced that it is important to preserve the Omani khanjar as well as other heritage and craft. The Ministry of Heritage and Culture initiated steps to save the khanjar industry by opening many museums and saving many old scrolls, keeping them in a safe place, as these documents are very important to Oman. In 2004, the government started a Public Authority for craft industries, to preserve such heritage and craft that forms the foundation of the country and its people. Many workshops have been held by the Public Authority for craft industries, for the new generation to increase awareness of all kinds of craft, in order to save them from extinction.

Khanjar

In this page the reader will get information about the khanjar parts and materials been used to manufacture khanjar. In the parts of the khanjar page the reader will get close idea of each part name and information about it. Each khanjar style has differing parts and design from others. The page for the materials will explain their application.

Types

This page it is very important to the readers especially the Omani people, because most Omanis are not aware of the variety of khanjar types. In the page of types the reader will get information about each types of khanjar in

Oman and also the different between them. The page of traditonal un-named Omani khanjars will show two foound in the *Bait Al Zubair* museum. The page of new khanjar types will explain new types and closely look at each part. The last page will be about fake khanjars. This page is very important to the Omani new generation because they are not aware about this type and most of them purchase them.

Uses of Khanjar

Wearing a khanjar is part of Omani life style. It is part of national attire and is also a symbol of status and manhood. This segment also explains how the khanjar was used as a weapon of self-defence and an indispensable item of living in the past. The uses of the khanjar in the past and present are clearly explained in this segment. Also the art page will explain how the khanjar used in the Omani traditional art.

Gallery

This is the most richly illustrated segment of the website. The numerous images in this segment are intended to provide a beautiful touch to the website and offer the reader illustrated knowledge about the differing shapes and colours, as well as the old and new designs of khanjars. Illustrations of the differing khanjar designs and names according to regions, as well as images of how Omani wear khanjars.

This segment is presented with a series of albums containing images of different types and parts of the khanjar, models wearing the Khanjar. Ease of navigation to each album allows the reader to view the list of other albums on the top of the page while accessing an album. This makes it unnecessary for the user to revert to the previous page if wanting to access other albums. In addition, each image can be enlarged by clicking on it (see Figure 530).



Figure 530 Website gallery page English © Khalid Al Busaidi

Contact

A form of contact is made available in this page for interested users who have queries, requests or would like to contribute any further information about khanjars. They are required to fill in a simple form to provide their name and email address for correspondence before submitting their queries. These queries will have been sent directly to my e-mail inbox.

Appendix 4

Interview questions and forms

Interview questions

1. What is your full name and date of birth?
2. When was the first time you wore a Khanjar?
3. When do you think is the best age to start wearing Khanjar?
4. Who taught you the art of Khanjar making? What is your age at that time?
5. How long did your mentor can finish making one Khanjar?
6. How long did your mentor work on Khanjars himself?
7. Why did you choose this art/craft/field to learn Khanjar making?
8. Did you face difficulties in learning this art/craft?
9. What was the most difficult part of learning this craft?
10. What are Khanjar? What is the definition of Khanjar?
11. How many parts are there of a Khanjar? What are the names of each part?
12. What are the accessories they use with the Khanjar in the past and now?
13. Do you think that the shape and components of Khanjar change over time?
14. What were the uses of Khanjars in the past?
15. What are the uses of Khanjars now?
16. What other countries also have Khanjars in their traditional outfits?
17. What is different between the Omani Khanjar and other Khanjars?
18. What materials are used in Khanjar making?
19. Do you get all materials you need to make a Khanjar in Oman, or do you have to import it?
20. What are the materials easily found in Oman?
21. What are the rare materials difficult to find in Oman?
22. What difficulties did you face in the past to gather the material you need?
23. What difficulties do you face today to gather the material you need?
24. What tools were used in the past to make a Khanjar?
25. What tools do you use nowadays to make Khanjar?

26. Are there any tools you have to make? If so what are they? Why do you have to make it?
27. Could you tell us about the different types/styles of Khanjars in Oman?
28. Do those differences depend on the region?
29. How is a Khanjar owner supposed to take care of his Khanjar? Are there specific ways of storing the Khanjar?
30. Does a Khanjar need cleaning?
31. Can a Khanjar owner clean his own Khanjar?
32. What items do you need to be able to clean a Khanjar?
33. What is the correct way of wearing an Omani Khanjar?
34. What are the common mistakes you see that men do when wearing a Khanjar?
35. What are your predictions on what future generations would use the Khanjar for? And how likely it is that they would own one?
36. Do you think that if we move in the development of industries and the development form and design of Khanjar might encourage younger generations to the acquisition and wearing a Khanjar?
37. Are there any centres for the training of Khanjar craft industry?
38. Do you think that the younger generation with a desire to learn this craft?
39. Is your children/family interested in learning the traditional art from you?
40. What skills, in your opinion do one need to have to be able to become a Khanjar maker?
41. What would you like to say to the current Omani generation about wearing or owning a Khanjar?
42. Have you heard any old story In Khanjar history or is there a single special Khanjar that was famous amongst people?
43. Do you specialise in any specific type/style of Khanjar? Why?
44. How long does it take to finish one a Khanjar?
45. What makes you keep your career as Khanjar maker?
46. What characterize you Khanjar from other Khanjar maker?
47. Would you be able to identify a Khanjar you made?
48. How many Khanjars have you made to date?

49. What was the best Khanjar you made and who owns it now?
50. What the advantage of this Khanjar, and what making it the best you think?
51. Could you produce separate parts of a Khanjar as customer request?
52. What do you think of Khanjar made by more than one craft man?
53. Do you own any Khanjar that is made by a different Khanjar artist? Why?
54. What is the lowest price for a Khanjar and why?
55. What is the highest price for a Khanjar and why?
56. There are some western myths about the supernatural powers of Khanjars, what is your view on this?
57. Any other comments you would like to add about the Omani Khanjar?

Forms

Demographic Details

Name:
Date of Birth:
Home Address:
Region: State: Village:
Occupation:
Phone Number (to contact you for information if needed):

After learning about the study aims and details, do you agree to take part in this interview (please note that the interview will be videotaped for data gathering purposes)

I accept ()
I do NOT accept ()

If you would not like to continue with this interview could you please give us your reason?

Name:

Signature

The information provided at the time of the interview is true to my knowledge and belief

Contact details are:

PhD Researcher Khalid Hilal Zahir Al Busaidi PhD Student (Curtin University) Lecturer: Nizwa College of Applied Sciences P.O.Box: 546 P.C: 111 Muscat airport, Oman Mob: + 968 96104421 Khalid.4545@hotmail.com	Supervisor Dr. Terence Love FDRS, AMIMechE, PMACM, MISI School of Design and Art, Curtin University, P.O.Box: U1987, Perth, Western Australia 6845 Mob: 0434 975 848, Fax: +61(0)8 9305 7629 t.love@curtin.edu.au
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The contact details of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Secretary) should participants wish to make a complaint on ethical grounds (phone: 9266 2784 or hrec@curtin.edu.au or in writing C/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth WA 6845, Australia)

I, _____, give my permission to allow KHALID HILAL ZAHIR AL BUSAIDI, current student of Curtin University of Technology, to use the following selected information below of OMANI KHANJAR for his PhD research.

- Information given in interview
- Photographs
- Data collection
- Recording of the interview
- Use my NAME and details

I am fully aware that all the information gathered in this interview will be used for as described in the information sheet research. He has been assured that full rights to this information can be used at his own discreet.

Interviewee's Name:	Witness' Name:	Interviewer's Name:
Date:	Signature:	Khalid Hilal Zahir Al Busaidi
Signature:		Signature:

Contact Details

<p>PhD researcher Khalid Hilal Zahir Al Busaidi PhD Student (Curtin University) Lecturer at: Nizwa College of Applied Sciences Mob: + 968 96104421 Khalid.4545@hotmail.com P.O.Box: 546 P.C: 111 Muscat airport, Oman</p>	<p>PhD supervisor Dr. Terence Love FDRS, AMIMechE, PMACM, MISI School of Design and Art Curtin University, P.O.Box: U1987, Perth, Western Australia 6845 Mob: 0434 975 848, Fax: +61(0)8 9305 7629, t.love@curtin.edu.au</p>
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Research Information Sheet
An In-Depth Investigation into the Traditional Design of Khanjar (Omani
Dagger)
(PhD Research, Curtin University of Technology, Australia)

The researcher thanks participants for their potential future involvement in this research.

The research will investigate the Omani Khanjar: its use, history, cultural importance and manufacture. The research gathers information about the Omani Khanjar: its use, history, cultural importance and manufacture using interviews of khanjar makers and surveys of khanjar users. It is being undertaken for the award of the PhD at Curtin University of Technology by: Khalid Al Busiadi, M.A.

The researcher is an Omani and a native Arabic speaker. He will gather the above information in Oman and elsewhere by semi-structured interviews with khanjar makers and a questionnaire of khanjar users, and from documentary and artifact sources including examples of Khanjar, parts of khanjar and related objects and activities.

Interviews with individual khanjar makers are expected to take around 3 hours. Questionnaires are expected to take around 20 minutes to complete. It is intended that interviews will be filmed and recorded as will artifacts and historical sources. This will be done by notes and sketches and recordings using film, photographs and audio.

The information that is gathered will be analyzed later by the researcher and the data and the findings from the analyses will be presented in his PhD thesis. It is also envisaged the researcher will make available his research findings via a book, film and website(s) in Arabic and English.

Access to personal data of participants will be limited to the researcher and supervisor. Those participating in the interviews will be identifiable in the recordings and findings that will be made public and in the PhD thesis which is also public. The questionnaire survey of khanjar users will be anonymous and any contact details for delivery of questionnaires will be known only to the researcher and their supervisor and kept separate from the anonymous questionnaire data. Personal contact data will be kept for a maximum of 5 years and will be kept on the PhD student's computer during the field research and afterwards in a locked cabinet accessible only to the PhD student and supervisor. All data will be kept primarily in computer readable electronic form and backed up on usb flash drives, hard disks and CD/DVDROM disks.

Participation in the research is completely voluntary. Participants are at liberty to withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. Non-participation will not affect an individual's rights/access to other services.

Benefits and risks to khanjar maker participants are primarily associated with increased public awareness of their skills, services and products. Benefits and risks to anonymous survey users are limited by anonymity.

Please feel free to contact the researcher or their supervisor if you have questions. Contact details are:

PhD Researcher Khalid Hilal Zahir Al Busaidi PhD Student (Curtin University) Lecturer: Nizwa College of Applied Sciences P.O.Box: 546 P.C: 111 Muscat airport, Oman Mob: + 968 96104421 Khalid.4545@hotmail.com	Supervisor Dr. Terence Love FDRS, AMIMechE, PMACM, MISI School of Design and Art, Curtin University, P.O.Box: U1987, Perth, Western Australia 6845 Mob: 0434 975 848, Fax: +61(0)8 9305 7629 t.love@curtin.edu.au
The contact details of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Secretary) should participants wish to make a complaint on ethical grounds (phone: 9266 2784 or hrec@curtin.edu.au or in writing C/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth WA 6845, Australia)	

This project is approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Approval Number:

ورقة بحث عن المعلومات
التحقيق متصفاً التحقيق في التصميم التقليدي للخنجر العماني
(بحث دكتوراه ، جامعة كورنين للتكنولوجيا ، أستراليا)

الباحث يشكر المشاركون في البحث على مشاركتهم في هذا البحث
الباحث سيقيم في التحقيق عن الخنجر العماني : استخدامه تاريخه والأهمية الثقافية وطرق تصنيعه. وجمع المعلومات البحثية عن الخنجر العماني وسيستقي الباحث معلوماته من خلال المقابلات مع صائغي ومستخدمي الخنجر ، ويجري ذلك لمخ شهادته الدكتوراه من جامعة كورنين للتكنولوجيا من قبل الفاضل / خالد البوسعيدي.

الباحث صائغي للجسدية ولغته الأم هي اللغة العربية. وسيقوم بجمع المعلومات المذكورة أعلاه في عمان وغيرها عن طريق المقابلات شبه المنظمة مع صائغي الخناجر والاساتين الخاص لمستخدمين لخنجر ، ومن الوثائق والقطع الأثرية التي تضم أمثلة لأشكال الخناجر ، وأجزائها، من الأنشطة ذات الصلة باستخدام الخنجر.

ومن المتوقع أن تستغرق المقابلات مع صائغي الخنجر تقنية حوالي 3 ساعات، ويأخذ الاستبيان حوالي 20 دقيقة لإكماله. ومن المقرر أن يتم تصوير المقابلات وتسجيل التعف والمصادر التاريخية. وسيتم ذلك من خلال أخذ الملاحظات والرسومات والتسجيلات والتصوير المرئي بالصوت والصورة.

وسوف يتم تحليل المعلومات التي يتم جمعها لاحقاً من قبل الباحث والبيانات والنتائج المستخلصة من التحليلات وستعرض في أطروحة الدكتوراه. وأن الباحث سوف يقوم بوضع نتائج أبحاثه عن طريق فيلم تصويري وكتاب وموقعه في شبكة المعلومات العالمية باللغتين العربية والانجليزية.

وسيقصر الوصول إلى البيانات الشخصية للمشاركين عن طريق الباحث والمشرّف على الأطروحة فقط والمشاركين في المقابلات يمكن التعرف عليهم عن طريق التسجيلات والنتائج التي سيتم الإعلان عنها في أطروحة الدكتوراه والتي ستكون عامة ويمكن الاطلاع عليها.

والاستبيان الذي سيملي من مستخدمي الخنجر يكون مجهول المصدر وستكون تفاصيل الاستمارة معروفة فقط لدى الباحث والمشرّف وتبقى منفصلة عن بيانات الاستبيان، وسيبقى البيانات الشخصية لمدة أقصاها 5 سنوات ، وسيبقى في جهاز الحاسب الآلي لمطّلب الدكتوراه خلال الأبحاث الميدانية وبعد ذلك سيتم الاحتفاظ بها في خزانة مقفلة يتم الوصول إليها عن طريق مطّلب الدكتوراه والمشرّف. وستبقى جميع البيانات في المقام الأول في الحاسب الآلي قابلة للقراءة واحتياطياً على ذاكرة فلاش ، والأقراص المسجلة والأقراص المدمجة دي في دي.

المشاركة في هذا البحث هو تطوعي بحث. المشاركون لهم الحرية في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون وجود أي عواقب لذلك. أما عدم المشاركة لا يؤثر على حقوق الفرد / الوصول إلى الخدمات الأخرى.

للتوائد والمخاطر التي يتعرض لها المشاركون صائغي الخنجر ترتبط في المقام الأول مع زيادة الوعي لجمهورهم ، ومهاراتهم ومنتجاتهم، وتتمركز على عدم الكنتف عن هويته.
لا تتردد في الاتصال بالباحث أو المشرّف إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة

تفاصيل الاتصال :

PhD Researcher Khalid Hilal Zahir Al Busaidi PhD Student (Curtin University) Lecturer: Nizwa College of Applied Sciences P.O.Box: 546 P.C: 111 Muscat airport, Oman Mob: + 968 96104421 Khalid.4545@hotmail.com	Supervisor Dr. Terence Love FDRS, AMIMEchE, PMACM, MISA School of Design and Art, Curtin University, P.O.Box: U1987, Perth, Western Australia 6845 Mob: 0434 975 848, Fax: +61(0)8 9305 7629 t.love@curtin.edu.au
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To whom it may concern,

Re: Permission to carry out required activities for research

We would like to inform you that Khalid Hilal Zahir Al-Busaidi is a student from Curtin University of Technology, Australia, and is pursuing his PhD Design. It is a requirement in his course of study that he completes a research study. He has chosen to carry out a research on the Omani national dagger (Khanjar), produce his findings and present it for assessment. Please grant him permission to carry out activities needed for his research including viewing all related documents, interviewing Khanjar makers, taking of photographs, Film, and etc. Your understanding and cooperation is much appreciated.

إلى من يهمه الأمر،

الموضوع : إذن لتنفيذ الأنشطة المطلوبة للبحث

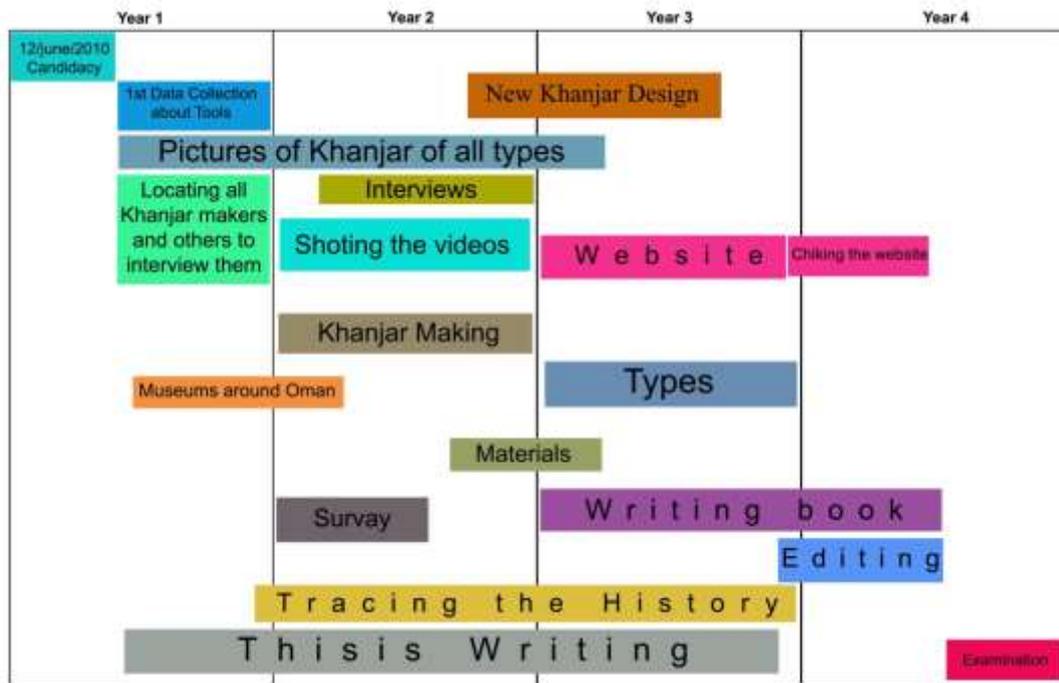
نود أن أحيطكم علما بأن الفاضل/ خالد بن هلال بن زاهر البوسعيدي وهو طالب في جامعة كورنثين للتكنولوجيا - استراليا ، و الذي يدرس الدكتوراه في التصميم. ومن متطلبات دراسته أن يعمل دراسة بحثية، ولقد اختار لإجراء بحثه عن الخنجر العماني، ثم دراسة النتائج التي توصل إليها وتحليلها ثم تقديمها للتقييم.

عليه يرجى التكرم بمنحه الإذن لتنفيذ الأنشطة اللازمة لأبحاثه بما في ذلك عرض جميع الوثائق ذات الصلة ، وإجراء المقابلات لمصنعي الخنجر العماني ، وأخذ الصور الفوتوغرافية ، والأفلام ... الخ إن تفهمكم وتعاونكم هذا هو محل تقدير كبير لدينا.

Contact Details

Khalid Hilal Zahir Al Busaidi PhD Student (Curtin University) Lecturer at: Nizwa College of Applied Sciences Mob: + 968 96104421 khalid.4545@hotmail.com P.O.Box: 546 P.C: 111 Muscat airport, Oman	Dr. Terence Love FDRS, AMIMechE, PMACM, MISA School of Design and Art Curtin University, P.O.Box: U1987, Perth, Western Australia 6845 Mob: 0434 975 848 Fax: +61(0)8 9305 7629, t.love@curtin.edu.au
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Timeline



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