



## Element Form

### 1. Defining the intangible cultural heritage element

- Name of the element as used:

Homemade palm wicker industry (Khous)

- Other name (if any):

Palm industry, textile industry – *khouasa* craft

- Domain(s) of heritage manifested by the element:

The skills related to the palm wicker weaving craft

- Practitioners and groups concerned:

Craftsmen and craftswomen who practice palm wicker weaving

- Geographical location and range of the element:

The palm wicker weaving craft is practiced in oases due to its close association with palm trees.

- Brief description of the element:

The palm tree is one of the most important trees that God has bestowed on the Emirati people, as its bounty and gifts are never-ending.<sup>1</sup> The wicker industry is one of the traditional industries that is prevalent in the United Arab Emirates, especially in oasis areas, due to the abundance of palm trees. The United Arab Emirates has shown a notable interest in preserving the wicker

<sup>1</sup> - Al Dhafra, Issue 9, Tuesday 1 January 2008-22 Dhu Al Hijjah 1428 AH, p. 70.

industries.

Wickers are made of palm fronds<sup>2</sup>. The industry is also known as the “palm industry” because of its association with palm trees, as well as the term “textile industry.” According to ancient Arab sources, the *khous* industry was known as “the *khouasa* craft”.

Features of the wicker industry:

The *khous* industry is characterized by its precision, beauty and excellence. It encompasses many products, which were considered a necessity of life in the past. The *khous* industry remains one of the traditional industries and is also known as the palm industry. It has various other names which differ from one region to another.<sup>3</sup>

Tools used in the palm wicker industry:

The leaves or the fronds of palm trees are used in the *khous* industry. This craft is widely practiced by the Emirati people due to the availability of the necessary raw materials resulting from widespread palm cultivation in large parts of the country, in addition to the simple tools needed in the industry which include bones, pointed stones, bodkins and needles, scissors and bowls in which the leaves are submersed.<sup>4</sup>

The narrator Umm Khaled mentions that the palm *khous* is of two types: the first arises from the pulp of the palm and is called the "middle mold" of the palm, especially in small palm trees, while the second type is obtained from the *khous* that is located at the edges of the palm frond. Each of them has its

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<sup>2</sup> *Khous*: are palm frond leaves collected and weaved by hand in broad braids that can be narrow or wide depending on the production process. The *khous* leaves are intertwined with each other in the braid after they turn white as a result of exposure to the sun. See Hamdi Tammam, *Zayed Encyclopaedia*, Vol. Two, UAE and Heritage, Abu Dhabi, 2nd Edition, 1992, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> - Al Dhafra, Issue 41, Wednesday, 22 Ramadan 1431 AH, 1 September 2010, p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> Hamdi Tammam, *Zayed Encyclopaedia*, the previous reference, p. 128.

own separate industries. The first type is used in the manufacture of *surood*, *mekhrafa* and *juffair*<sup>5</sup>,

The second type represents the rest of the regular palm leaves, which are coarser leaves that are dipped in water to soften them in order to facilitate reshaping them to use in the production of tools such as *khisf*, *malalah*, *sama*, *haseer*, *yalla* and *mazmah*.<sup>6</sup>

Uses of palm trees:

The Emirati people used fronds in many industries, including: constructing roofs, beds, chairs, children's beds, and bird cages, in addition to *khassafa*, *hasr*<sup>7</sup>, carpets, *makhareef*<sup>8</sup>, *sarareed*<sup>9</sup>, *makanis*<sup>10</sup>, *makab*, *maha*<sup>11</sup>, *mazami*, and *jufran*<sup>12</sup> in addition to all other home furniture and tools.<sup>13</sup>

Dyeing palm wicker products:

The narrator Hidayat Al Kaabi refers to the method of dyeing the *khous* and mentions: "After choosing the required colour, we bring a container in which we pour the dyed water until the colour of the *khous* darkens. The colours used include orange, blue, green and red, after which we let the *khous* dry. Then, we perform *siffa* to produce *surood*, *mujabba*, or *qaffah*, etc."<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Features of the Element:

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Moza Rashid Hamid Al Nuaimi, Umm Khaled, Souq Al Qattara, Al Ain, 08/01/2014.

<sup>6</sup> Hamdi Tammam, Zayed Encyclopaedia, the previous reference, p. 38-39.

<sup>7</sup> floor mat, and is also known as "haseer",

<sup>8</sup> Used to collect dates from palm tree stems.

<sup>9</sup> Spread under the dinner table.

<sup>10</sup> The singular form, *maknasa*, which is used to organize household items. As for the *asuw*, it is a dried palm tree stem that is used in cleaning the house yard.

<sup>11</sup> A handheld fan made of fronds used to create airflow

<sup>12</sup> A basket in which tools are carried. There is also a large "jufran" for carrying vegetables such as onions, radishes, carrots and others. See: Abdullah Ali Al Taboor, Fatima Masoud Al Mansoori et. al., An Introduction to Folklore in the UAE, Under the supervision of Muhammad Al Naboodah, Zayed Centre for Heritage and History, Al Ain, 1st Edition, 2002, p. 289.

<sup>13</sup> Al Nakheel Society for Folk Arts, Profiles of the Heritage and Folklore of the UAE Society, Publications of the Cultural Foundation, Ras Al Khaimah, 1st Edition, 1996, p. 128.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Hidayat Al Kaabi, Umm Khalifa, Souq Al Qattara, Al Ain, 21/01/2014.

- Concerned practitioners and performers of the element (including name, gender, occupational category, etc.):

Members of the community, both men and women. The practitioners are predominantly women.

- Other participants whose work relates to the element:

Producers of the materials and tools necessary for the palm frond craft such as needles, in addition to the workers who prepare the fronds that are used in the industry.

- The language (s) used (in the element):

The local dialect is used in the chants and conversations exchanged between the participants while working.

- Tangible elements associated with the practice of the element and its transmission, such as: instruments, equipment, costumes, spaces, and ritual tools (if any):

Pointed stones – bodkins – needles – scissors – bowls for submerging tree leaves

- Other intangible elements related to the practice and transmission of the element in question (if any):

Some chants and stories are exchanged for amusement and to pass the time during the manufacturing processes

- Customary practices governing access to the element or any of its specific aspects

There are no restrictions to those wishing to access the element.

- Modes of transmitting the element to others within the group:

The element is transmitted in society through education and training in training

centres and artisan houses for those wishing to learn the craft. Parents and experienced individuals also transmit it to their children and grandchildren.

- Concerned organizations if any (associations/civil society organizations, etc.):

The National Traditional Handicrafts Festival – Souq Al Qattara activities – Al Wathba Festival – heritage villages – Sheikh Zayed Heritage Festival – artisan houses – heritage associations.

### 3. Status of the element: its viability and sustainability

- Threats to the practicing of the element in the context of the relevant community / groups concerned:

- The *khous* industry is one of the traditional industries that is practiced on a large scale without restrictions or threats facing its practitioners.

- Methods of preserving and promoting the element:

- Products related to *khous* are promoted at festivals and exhibitions, artisan houses, heritage societies, and traditional markets.

### 4. Data: restrictions, and private permissions (collectively and access)

- Group / community approval and involvement in data collection:

The narrators I interviewed were positive in terms of collecting and documenting this craft. There is also a joint cooperation with them to document this heritage.

- Restrictions on data access and use

There are no imposed restrictions. In fact, there is community and administrative coordination to obtain the necessary data from the official and private authorities.

- Experts and narrators (their names, position, and affiliation):

Moza Rashid Hamid Al Nuaimi, Umm Khaled, Souq Al Qattara, Al Ain, on 08/01/2014.

Hedaya Al Kaabi, Umm Khalifa, Souq Al Qattara, Al Ain, on 21/01/2014.

- Dates and locations of data collection:

In Souq Al Qattara in Al Ain, on 08/01/2014 and 21/01/2014.

## 5. Sources of information about the element (if any)

- Literature: books, articles, and others:

- Al Dhafra, Issue 9, Tuesday 1 January 2008–22 Dhu Al Hijjah 1428 AH.
- Al Dhafra, Issue 41, Wednesday, 22 Ramadan 1431 AH, 1 September 2010.
- Tamam, Hamdi, Zayed Encyclopaedia, Vol. Two, UAE and Heritage, Abu Dhabi, 2nd Edition, 1992.
- Al Nakheel Society for Folk Arts, Profiles of the Heritage and Folklore of the UAE Society, Publications of the Cultural Foundation, Ras Al Khaimah, 1st Edition, 1996.
- Abdullah Ali Al Taboor, Fatima Masoud Al Mansoori et. al., Introduction to Folklore in the UAE, under the supervision of Muhammad Al Naboodah, Zayed Centre for Heritage and History, Al Ain, 1st Edition, 2002.

- Audio-visual materials, records etc. in archives, museums, and private collections (if any):

A recording of the interview with Moza Rashid Hamid Al Nuaimi is available

A recording of the interview with Hedaya Al Kaabi is available

- Documentary materials and tools in archives, museums and private collections (if any):

There are displays of many palm wicker products in museums.

6. Data about the inventory process

- The person(s) who performed the classification and collection

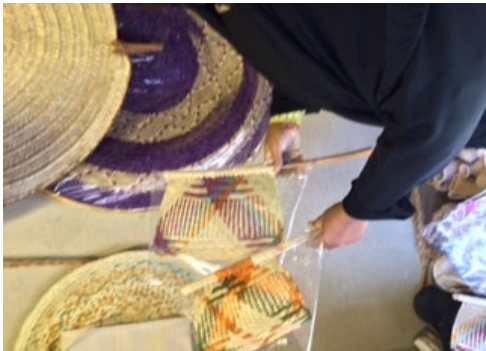
Ruqaya Soubeih Khamis Saeed Al Kaabi

- Date the information was entered into the inventory:

24/01/2015

- Pictures:

Pictures of Moza Al Shamsi's interview at Souq Al Qattara





Pictures of Hidayat Al Kaabi's interview at Souq Al Qattara



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