OMANICA IN OMANI PROVERBS AND SAYINGS
THE MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:
(1) POTTERIES AND KITCHEN UTENSILS

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(1) Omani proverb / al-Humaydi 1986-94: 1, 155, No. 176

Oman is a country which places special emphasis on the preservation of her heritage. Different local crafts are being continued and preserved. Pottery making is one of these crafts. The town of Bahla in central Oman has been the main centre of pottery in the area. Bahla wares occur on almost all the Islamic archaeological sites of the region and on many of the pre-Islamic sites. Though the date of the beginnings of the Bahla industry is still to be determined, it has been established that the forms of the Bahla wares are directly inspired by south-east Asian pottery. Today Bahla is known as the 'pottery capital of Oman'. Its fine white dust is ideally suited to pot-making. Potters still create a variety of earthenware for practical purposes, like storing dates, cooling water, cooking or burning incense.

This continuing industry permeates people's everyday life, so it is little wonder that earthenware products are mentioned in a wide variety of proverbs. The present article is the continuation of our previous investigations (Dévényi 1996, 2001) where the representation of the living environment - fauna and flora - in Omani proverbs was treated. The material environment, however, is also well attested in proverbs. In the analysis of Omani proverbs the following broad groups of objects can be defined:

(a) potteries and kitchen utensils;
(b) baskets, mats etc. made of palm leaf and other material;
(c) food;
(d) clothing;
(e) the house and its surroundings;
(f) fishing & sailing;
(g) tools of agriculture & animal husbandry;
(h) the well;
(i) other utensils and miscellaneous objects.

1 For the significance of the Bahla wares for the history of Oman, see Whitcomb 1975:129. For a vivid description of the potters of Bahla at work, see St Albans 1980:128-129.
The following proverbs show the infiltration into the proverbs of objects belonging to group (a) from among the material environment, i.e. potteries and kitchen utensils. These proverbs - which reflect people's awareness of the objects that surround them - are, naturally, interpreted in a way which is relevant to the people's behaviour. Reading them, however, we get a glimpse of everyday life and we get to know how these utensils should be used.

1. an earthen cooking vessel, a medium-size pottery, smaller than a / *marmite* / *burma* / *sirki* used for water, honey and boiling coffee
   No. 131 (I, 125); J 38
   "A pot in partnership does not boil*. 'A pot that belongs to many is ill stirred and worse boiled'. It is so because everybody considers it someone else's duty to attend to the pot. Similar in content to (13) and (28).

2. Same as (33), cf. also (42).

3. A cauldron can only be put on two/three stones*. Used to express indispensability.
   No. 1392 (I, 125); J 232
   "Better a morsel [ready cooked] than an [empty] pot*. 'A bird in a hand is worth two in the bush'.
   *Persian tawa* frying pan, skillet

4. A different version of this proverb is: *qadar fleske* mä *tšir-břa* (Reinhardt 1894:400, No. 35), where another pottery is mentioned making no difference to the purport of the proverb. Another variant of this proverb has been collected by al-Akwâbi in the Tihâma (1984: I, 276, No. 913); *birmat as-sirki* ma *tšir-břa* and by al-'Ubûdî in the Najd (1959: 215, No. 546): *qadar al-širki* ma *yufšah*.

5. A highly interesting volume combining potteries and proverbs had been published by N. H. Henein in 1992. In 1979, on the occasion of the 2nd International Congress of Egyptologists, Henein was asked to exhibit present day potteries he had collected all over Egypt. Nine years later he came across a collection of 20,000 Egyptian proverbs and sayings. This corpus gave him an impetus to look for proverbs that mention names of potteries. His investigation resulted in a study which presents the objects of this corpus together with a collection of 149 'pottery proverbs'. From this number 112 are contained in the manuscript collection of 20,000 proverbs. This proportion may become significant if compared to other collections. The corpus of 1,200 proverbs collected by Al Sudais in the Najd contains only five 'pottery proverbs'. The collection of 2749 Omani proverbs contain 22 pottery proverbs (not counting other kitchen utensils). The proportion of pottery proverbs in these three collections are as follows: Najd 0.416%, Egypt 0.56% and Oman 0.8%.

6. See proverbs 9 and 10 below.

7. Cf. Henein 1992:34, 40, 41, potteries Nos 40, 48, 51: *borma* "marmite, récipient pour la cuisson (au four / sur réchaud)". The potteries presented by Henein are not similar to those used in Oman. Proverbs are not connected to this word by Henein. It is worth noting that Vollers (1895:512) saw in the simultaneous existence of this word in Oman and Egypt a proof for the early appearance of south Arabian population in the Nile valley. According to Landberg (1901-13: II, 597) "la *burmâh* est, chez les Bédouins, une grande marmite en marbre vert, tandis qu'à Aiden et dans le Yémen, c'est une petite marmite en terre cuite".

8. The 'Nos.' followed by volume and page numbers refer to al-Humaydî 1986-94. The following abbreviations are used throughout the article: B - Brockett 1985; J - Jayakar 1904; and R - Reinhardt 1894. When proverbs are quoted, the numerals after these abbreviations refer to the number of the proverb in the given collection. When words are quoted from Brockett 1985, the numeral after B refers to the number of the lexical entry.

9. For a detailed description of the *tawâ*, see Redhouse 1884-90:482.
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No. 256 (I, 200)13

"The tin plate blames the cauldron. 'The devil rebuking sin.'

The bread baking plate is usually black because of its constant use on the fire, so it is generally in worse condition than the cauldron.

Same as (32).

v.

[Earthenware container for cooling water in it — B 217 gable 'an unglazed, spheroid water-pot' suspended from its neck, allowing some water to seep through and evaporate and so cool the remainder inside

No. 304 (I, 231)

"[It is] a broken pot but it can still cool [the water]." Success in surmounting difficulties.

No. 506 (I, 354)14

"He increased the sea by a pot[-ful]." Like flogging a dead horse. The sea is already "full", so the effort will make no difference.

vi.

[Small earthenware jug for cooling water, B 225 gadwiyya, gdaws: a small gable, Reinhardt (1894:74 § 127) drinking jug

No. 1366 (III, 54)15

"The sister in law is a scorpion in the water cooling jug". This proverb reflects the general tendency to stigmatize in-laws.

vii.

[Jar 16

Not every time is the jar saved". 'A pitcher goes often to the well but is broken at last'.

No. 2005 (III, 259)

See (28) below.

viii.

[Half of a coconut used for drinking water

No. 1798 (III, 199)

See (44) below.

ix.

[Big earthenware jar; B 410 bars (hruš) an earthenware pot for storing suhb, smaller than a hill; Reinhardt (1894:184 § 308) big water-jar

No. 1025 (II, 274)

"The [date]-jar is broken [only] if the [folded] mat is spread out".

No. 2324 (IV, 31)19

"A handful of pressed dates is missing from the jar". Disapproval of greed and envy. 'That puts the lid on it!'

x.

[Big container, tank — B 463 debbe a plastic water-container holding at least a gallon

No. 231 (I, 183)20

"Who can go down into /jump into/21 a tank would not be stupefied by a grain".

xi.

A copper bowl, three to four feet in diameter, for preparing and serving halwa; B 499 dest21

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13 A more elaborate version – with different utensils – has been collected by (a) Feghali (1938: No. 1185) and (b) Abela (1981-85: I, 285, No. 1119): 

Cf. also al-'Ubudi (1959:131, No. 355): 

14 Brockett (1965:36, No. 15) has collected the following version of this proverb: le izid il bahh gable 'Don't increase the sea by a pot[-ful]'.

15 A proverb with the same purport is listed by Abela (1981-85: I, 353, No. 1398): 

Relatives in general are likened to the scorpion in the proverb: al-agāris hum al-agāris which is listed under the heading 'the mutual envy of relatives' by Ibn 'Abdrabbih (Liq III, 43). This last proverb is found in a number of modern collections as well (eg. 'Atā Allāh 1984:135).

16 Henein lists six proverbs that contain the word garra (Henein 1992:53-54, potteries Nos. 70-71, proverbs nos. 103-108). From among these proverbs no. 106 is identical with our proverb. It is also contained in Taymūr's collection (1949: no. 2636).

17 Abela (1981-85: I, 261, No. 823) lists the following variant: karrūs ma ṭalā bi hāf "I ne faut pas trop tôt applaudir quelqu'un à qui les choses réussissent." In a version given by Feghali (1938: No. 1184) we find: le taza il labb hāf 'Il ne manquait plus à la marmite qu'un pied de mouton'.

18 In CA it means a jar, especially when black and coated with pitch.

19 A proverb similar in content but different in wording has been collected by Abela (1981-85: I, 373, No. 1479): "Il ne manquait plus à la marmite qu’un pied de mouton".

20 Cf. Reinhardt 1894:400, no. 26: keme bi jorqot l habbe u jukfyh bi debbe 'Wie derjenige, der ein Urn aufhebt und (dabei) ein Blechgefäß umstößt.'

21 For the meaning of the root q-h-m, see Brockett 1985:176, No. 1277.

22 Cf. Henein 1992:59, No. 80 a vessel also made of copper, but quite different in use and shape: marmite: récipient destiné à la cuisson des aliments sur le réchaud; généralement en cuivre". Nine proverbs contain this word according to Henein (1992:59-61).
"The bread baking plate is usually black because of its constant use on the fire, so it is generally in worse condition than the cauldron.

Same as (32).

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xi.  دست مارست a copper bowl, three to four feet in diameter, for preparing and serving ہالوا; B 499 ڈئیت

No. 1763 (III, 186); J 258 "Not every time is the jar saved". 'A pitcher goes often to the well but is broken at last'.

No. 2005 (III, 259) See (28) below.
No. 1170 (II, 338) "Like [hot] halawa in the dest". Said of a person who moves or talks too much.

xii. 

hand mill
No. 1456 (III, 86) "What is under the mill has to bear patiently its work".

xiii. 

knife
No. 560 (II, 29) "A knife can only cut if its handle is strong". 

No. 723 (II, 111); J:169 "My tooth is my knife and my stomach is my store basket". Though this proverb is usually applied to one who possesses nothing, it also expresses the capability of a person to rely exclusively upon himself.

No. 1464 (III, 89) "What can be cut by a palm leaf does not need a knife". There is no need to exaggerate the difficulties when there are none.

xiv. (diminutive from A) palm-leaf lid; B 808 "a conical, woven palm-leaf date-cover"
No. 614 (II, 57) "S. is the brother of M. / The date cover is just like the censer". 'Six of one and half a dozen of the other'.

xv. 

plate(s) 

No. 678 (II, 88) "Plates in the [same] house and make noise by knocking against one another". This proverb entices people to live in harmony and mutual understanding, without quarrelling constantly.

No. 2243 (III, 330) "From the harbi we [only] want the plate". Expresses resignation and the capability of renunciation.

xvi. 

bread baking tool 
No. 766 (II, 132) "If you praise the tubag it will burn, and if you praise the cat it will steal". To blame somebody for not living up to expectations. An interesting feature of the Omani proverb is that in contrast to the other variants, it suggests that an inanimate object can 'behave' and that its behaviour can be affected by what is said to it. Other similar proverbs limit the observation to an animal, be it the cat or the dog.

xvii. 

earthenware milk jug 
No. 243 (I, 191) "The house in which there is a milk jug will not be overtaken by contempt". The importance of keeping cattle.

xviii. 

earthenware lid — B 1276 "antique shards"; Reinhardt (1894:75 § 131) "fragments"; Harsusi "coconut-shell", etc.
No. 2005 p, 259 "The co-wife can be harmful even if she were as the lid of a jar", i.e. even if there is harmony between her and her husband.

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26 On the formation of a four-radical verb with r, i.e. qarta' from qata', see Reinhardt 1894:254, § 396.
27 Cooked meat and wheat pounded together.
28 A word of Turkish origin, where topa means, among others, 'round, globose' as an adjective, and 'a top' as a noun (cf. Redhouse 1884-90:1249).
29 A proverb similar in meaning has been collected by Abela (1981-85: I, 12, No. 43): "He is the brother of the milk jug", i.e. even if there is harmony between her and her husband.
30 A variant of this word (awm) appears in the same meaning in J 278: "If you want the milk a pot full, examine her [the cow's] state".
31 Cf. in Abela's collection (1981-85: I, 393, No. 1564): "The co-wife can be harmful even if she were as the lid of a jar", i.e. even if there is harmony between her and her husband.
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earthware milk jug

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"The house in which there is a milk jug will not be overtaken by contempt". The importance of keeping cattle.

xviii.

earthware lid — *

No. 2005 (III, 259)

"The co-wife can be harmful even if she were as the lid of a jar", i.e. even if there is harmony between her and her husband.

Cf. the Yemeni proverb (as-Saqqaf 1997:125, No. 403). This proverb, however, connecting the person to the utensil, expresses that if somebody feels himself/herself in danger, he/she would not further expose himself/herself.

On the masdar form يلگر، common in Omani Arabic, see Rhodokanakis 1908-11: II, 154, § 54 (d) and Reinhardt 1894:256, § 400.

The version given by Jayakar is somewhat different: 'نا نے کے چمک دشتی بے پتہ کیے بے پتہ کیے A proverb with the same meaning but different wording has been collected by Al Sudaïs (1993:59, No. 379): sāhati rūhani, bağni qrâbī.

S. and M. can be interpreted as proper names.
This proverb and its variants seem to be the colloquial equivalents of the well-known and well-attested classical proverb: ُنُفَعَاءُ ُتَنَامُ ُتَأَبَا. This proverb has been interpreted in different ways, since the original meaning of ُتَنَامُ ُتَأَبَا had already become obscure by the time of the explanations which are now extant. According to one interpretation to which a long story is connected (Maydani, 1, 423-424), ُتَنَامُ ُتَأَبَا was a person famous for his wit who was looking for an equally intelligent bride until he found ُتَأَبَا who won his heart by her wisdom. Irrespective of the given explanation, however, the classical proverb was always used in a positive sense, to describe harmony and congruity. It is, therefore, interesting to observe how the negative, pejorative sense has infiltrated into the meaning.

The proverb's variants seem to be the colloquial equivalents of the well-known and well-attested classical proverb: منْ أَعْجَّتْ كُرْمًا ُتَأَبَا (e.g. Maydani, 1, 4340). This proverb has been interpreted in different ways, since the original meaning of منْ أَعْجَّتْ كُرْمًا had already become obscure by the time of the explanations which are now extant. According to one interpretation to which a long story is connected (Maydani, 1, 423-424), منْ أَعْجَّتْ كُرْمًا was a person famous for his wit who was looking for an equally intelligent bride until he found ُتَأَبَا who won his heart by her wisdom. Irrespective of the given explanation, however, the classical proverb was always used in a positive sense, to describe harmony and congruity. It is, therefore, interesting to observe how the negative, pejorative sense has infiltrated into the meaning.

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No. 2047 (III, 272)

"I have seen Muscat and its forts, so I am not amazad by (the village of) Dar Sayt and its earthen ewers".33

See (30) above.

No. 2348 (IV, 44)

"We give you a drink from a cold earthen ewer".

See (8) above.

No. 2349 (IV, 44)

"We give you a drink from an empty (!) earthen ewer".

No. 2630 (IV, 172)

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The above four proverbs express disapproval of postponement and delay.

19. حُقْرَةُ أَدِمُ مُحْمَرُ (earthenware censer)

No. 614 (II, 57)

See (4) above, and cf. also (14) above.

No. 263 (I, 200)

See (8) above.

No. 968 (II, 246)

See (4) above.

No. 95 (I, 102); J 25

No. 2047 (III, 272)

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xxi.

Ma‘amūn

utensils; vessel

No. 1860 (III, 218)

"He does not give a drink from the vessel". The description of a miser.

No. 2523 (IV, 123)

"You eat in the vessel and foul it". 'It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.'

34 Cf. Landberg (1901-13: I, 706): küz, pl. kważ ‘gargoulette’. For the explanation of the word and a Yemeni proverb in which it is used, see al-Alqawa‘ (1984: II, 1054, No. 4480): ما يفعل من فاعل مَة يُفَعَّل küz haddad. Å

35 In Jayakar’s version: لُقَأَ عَمَّرَةٌ مِن الْمَعَامِنَ ‘لَمْ يَتَّقِ الْمَعَامِنَ’

36 Henein (1992:66, Nos. 141-144) cites other proverbs containing this word.

37 A similar proverb is attested by Landberg (1883:50, No. xxix: دَخَلَ مِن الْمَعَامِنَ ‘خَلَأَ الْمَعَامِنَ’

38 Other dialectal variants are also known. Cf. also the saying attributed to ‘Abdallah ibn az-Zubayr: arkalum tajrid ‘aw'as yam ‘amri (Maydani, 1, 115, No. 399).

A diminutive from miṣmar(a).
This proverb and its variants seem to be the colloquial equivalents of the well-known and well-attested classical proverb: 

\[\text{كوز} \Rightarrow \text{كوز} \Rightarrow \text{كوز}\]

It expresses harmony and congruity between things and implies that a person has found his/her equal'.

Some classical proverb: 

\[\text{كوز} \Rightarrow \text{كوز} \Rightarrow \text{كوز}\]

On the other hand, however, when referring to couples, this proverb most often has a pejorative connotation, since the original meaning of 

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was always used in a positive sense, to describe harmony and congruity. It is, therefore, interesting to observe how the negative, pejorative sense has infiltrated into the meaning.

\[\text{كوز} \Rightarrow \text{كوز} \Rightarrow \text{كوز}\]

No. 2047 (III, 272)

The ewer’s cover is a crock”. Same as (35). It has the same meaning as (29) and can be considered its variant.

xix.

٤٤

No. 176 (I, 155) [Only] what is in the pot can be taken out by the spoon.

No. 256 (I, 200)

See (8) above.

No. 968 (II, 246)

See (4) above, and cf. also (14) above.

xxi.

٤٥

No. 1860 (III, 218)

He does not give a drink from the vessel”. The description of a miser.

No. 2523 (IV, 123)

He eats in the vessel and fouls it”. ‘It’s an ill bird that fouls its own nest.’

xxii.

٤٥

No. 614 (II, 57)


\[\text{كرسولة} \Rightarrow \text{كرسولة} \Rightarrow \text{كرسولة}\]

(earthenware) censer

\[\text{kuz} \Rightarrow \text{kuz} \Rightarrow \text{kuz}\]

Cf. Landberg (1901-13: I, 706): kuz, pl. kwsaz ‘gargoulette’. For the explanation of the word and a Yemeni proverb in which it is used, see Al-Akwa’ (1984: II, 1054, No. 4480): mā fi ḥānānam kuz bared.

In Jayakar’s version: jlj ,> ■ .. I U Ul

xxvii.

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No. 819 (II, 246)

The above four proverbs express disapproval of postponement and delay.

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٤٥

A similar proverb to this and the next one has been collected by Feghali (1938: No. 1200) and Abela (1981-85: I, 22, No. 82): قَرْبُ مِنَ الْمَلَامَسِ / الخَمْرَ. The version collected by Al Sudais (1993:39, No. 264) is: يِبَعْذُ سَلْسَلَةَ، where ṣalṣal means ‘a little tin’.

٤٥

Cf. Landberg (1883:50, No. xxix: ox,>11 ^  J5’ Though a similar proverb is attested by Landberg (1883:51, No. 860) (earthenware) censer: "He gives you a drink from an empty (!) earthen ewer”.

٤٥


٤٥

A diminutive from miṣmar(a).
See (23) above.

xxiii. big cooking kettle, cauldron made of copper

No. 968 (II, 246) "The man who builds his house on sand is not likely to succeed".

Variant of (4).

No. 1797 (III, 198) "He does not put his cauldron on a dish".

No. 1798 (III, 199) "We do not put our cauldron on a coconut cup."

These last two proverbs describe, on the one hand, the impossibility of securing something if its foundation is unstable. While on the other hand, they assert that no such foolishness has been committed.

No. 2663 (IV, 182) "It boils like the cauldron".

"He does not put his cauldron on a dish".

Variant of (4).

No. 1797 (III, 198) "We do not put our cauldron on a coconut cup."

These last two proverbs describe, on the one hand, the impossibility of securing something if its foundation is unstable. While on the other hand, they assert that no such foolishness has been committed.

No. 2663 (IV, 182) "It boils like the cauldron".

xxiv. baking/frying place

No. 2544 (IV, 134) "The baking place is being prepared but the billy goat is still in the mountains". Expresses disapproval of unthoughtful behaviour.

xxv. fodder and the earthenware vessel in which it is made

No. 2042 (III, 270) "He measures for the dates of inferior quality". Exaggeration; mockery of those who devote special attention to trivial things.

No. 1812 (II, 202) "We are not making a sieve for the straw, nor a measure for barley". Used to express indifference or even contempt.

xxvii. sieve — B 1679 mohal [sic]; Reinhardt (1894:50, § 61) and Jayakar (1889:867) mohal

No. 167 (I, 148); J 5845 "A she-camel which carries a whole load is not overcome by [the weight of a] sieve". A person accustomed to great responsibilities will not be overburdened by a little more.

No. 363 (I, 264) "The truth cannot be hidden with a sieve". It is also similar in meaning to the next proverb.

43 Diminutive of Gubsa, a woman's name.

44 According to Donaldson (1993:89-91), mikyal is the name of a wooden bowl by which grains and other dry commodities are measured out. It has been used in Oman with at least two standards, that of al-Habura and 'ibri.

45 Proverbs similar in meaning but not in wording have been collected e.g. by Al Suda'is (1993:16, No. 103) and Feghali (1938: No. 540).

46 A proverb similar in meaning but different in form has been collected by Landberg (1883:199, No. 73): 'The love of a mother is not overcome by [the weight of a] sieve'.
See (23) above.

xxiii.

مرَّ جَلَ [big cooking kettle, cauldron made of copper]

No. 968 (II, 246) (92) الحَرَّة ما يُكرِّبُ إلا على ثَلاَثٍ/نِسَابَاتٍ

Variant of (4).

No. 1797 (III, 198)

"He does not put his cauldron on a sdis" bowl".

No. 1798 (III, 199)

"We do not put our cauldron on a coconut cup."

These last two proverbs describe, on the one hand, the impossibility of securing something if its foundation is unstable. While on the other hand, they assert that no such foolishness has been committed.

No. 2663 (IV, 182)

"It boils like the cauldron".

xxiv.

киш [baking/frying place]

No. 2544 (IV, 134)

"The baking place is being prepared but the billy goat is still in the mountains". Expresses disapproval of unthoughtful behaviour.

xxv.

مَزِينَة [fodder and the earthenware vessel in which it is made]

No. 2042 (III, 270)

See (29) above.

xxvi.

مَغِرَاف [ladle]

No. 176 (I, 155)

See (31) above.

39 Sdis (suds) is an Omani unit of capacity for measuring dry commodities. It is a subdivision of the mikyal, and is equivalent approximately to one litre. According to Donaldson (1993:90) "the mikyal of al-Khâbbrâh and the mikyal of ‘ibri, and also their subdivisions, took the physical form of carved wooden bowls". For further explanation on this appellation, see Donaldson 1993:107, fn 27. Reinhardt (1894:406, No. 90) has also collected a proverb containing this unit of capacity.

40 A fireplace made of a few stones where the slaughtered animals are fried.

41 Cf. B 1150 guhar “a fodder” given to livestock on the coast, mainly composed of banana-leaves, date-stones, burnt kereb, etc.


43 Diminutive of Gubsa, a woman’s name.

44 According to Donaldson (1993:89-91), mikyal is the name of a wooden bowl by which grains and other dry commodities are measured out. It has been used in Oman with at least two standards, that of al-Hâbrûra and ‘ibri.

45 Proverbs similar in meaning but not in wording have been collected e.g. by Al Suda’is (1993:16, No. 103) and Feghali (1938: No. 540).

46 A proverb similar in meaning but different in form has been collected by Landberg (1883:199, No. cviii): التي ما يضخَف من طراة القريبال يكون أعظم.
The sun cannot be covered (hidden) with a sieve. Expresses inappropriateness of things and impossibility of action.

No. 1812 (m, 202) JU V JU L. (oA)
See (53) above.

XXX.

(*)

The hand of a free man is a balance. A good merchant - who pays attention to what he is doing - can give you the weight you wanted by measuring the goods only with his hand.

Handle of knife

No. 560 (H, 29)
See (20) above.

XXXII.

(*)

Containers, household effects, things.

No. 1975 (m/251)

The woman is a container. Referring to the essential feminine roles of being pregnant and giving birth.

No. 142 (I, 133)

Iblis does not break his containers. A man, whatever damage he makes, would not harm himself or his own property.

Summing up, it can be established that a wide variety of information can be gathered from the proverbs that refer to potteries and kitchen utensils. We get to know these utensils, their appellations, what they are used for (e.g. 34-39) and how they should be used (e.g. 4).

The concrete observation of the use or misuse of these artefacts gave birth to the proverbs, which, on their turn, often became used in a more general sense. As can be seen from the above proverbs, whatever be the observation, the proverb is used to assess people's good or bad traits, and their behaviour. On the level of family life and relatives, we get a glimpse, for example, of the complications arising from the existence of co-wives (28), of the general pejorative view concerning in-laws (11). We also get to know some of the values within Omani society (e.g. 27). The everyday life of Omani people becomes apparent from these proverbs which absorbed the utensils. The proverbs, naturally, are also relevant from the point of view of the study of the Omani Arabic dialect. Apart from a few notes, however, the linguistic analysis of the proverbs should be the object of future research. The rapid disappearance of traditional crafts also highlights the importance of the preservation and study of these proverbs which preserve the names and functions of utensils that might soon fall into disuse.

REFERENCES

A. Primary sources


B. Secondary sources


No. 641 (II, 68)**

“The sun cannot be covered (hidden) with a sieve”. Expresses inappropriateness of things and impossibility of action.

No. 1812 (m, 202) JU V JU L. (oA)

See (53) above.

No. 2590 (IV, 155)« ^ « (*«

“The hand of a free[man, i.e. free to attend to his business, not preoccupied by something else] is a balance”. A good merchant - who pays attention to what he is doing - can give you the weight you wanted by measuring the goods only with his hand.

No. 560 (H, 29) UfeLuo^ i j i i VI JSU L. ¿A ...II (v )

See (20) above.

No. 1975 (m/251)

“The woman is a container”. Referring to the essential feminine roles of being pregnant and giving birth.

No. 142 (I, 133)51 L. 0 * )

“Iblis does not break his containers”. A man, whatever damage he makes, would not harm himself or his own property.

Summing up, it can be established that a wide variety of information can be gathered from the proverbs that refer to potteries and kitchen utensils. We get to know these utensils, their appellations, what they are used for (e.g. 34-39) and how they should be used (e.g. 4).

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