



Evidence Card for Investigator #4 – falaj irrigation



A falaj water channel is designed to use gravity to distribute water to people throughout the region. For at least 2,500 years, every effort has been made in Oman to make use of scarce water resources in a way that is fair to everyone. The first priority is ensuring that everyone has drinking water; then, water is allocated for irrigation for crops that take a long time to grow (such as date palms), whose loss in a time of drought would be catastrophic; then water is designated for seasonal crops and daily life, and so on down the hierarchy of needs. Omani custom dictated that all farmers should have equal access to water for irrigation of their crops. Therefore, Omanis very early on developed ways to calculate time exactly, using sundials in the day and star charts at night. Through careful calculations, village leaders created a system by which people took turns drawing off water for their crops and daily use.