

OMAN AIR  الطيران العماني

# WINGS OF OMAN

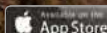
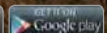
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# *Aflāj* Oman's life-giving water channels

**This month, the National Museum looks at Oman's ingeniously designed water channel systems known as *Aflāj*, which for many centuries have been used to channel water to Oman's villages and towns, often over long distances.**

The origins of Oman's *aflāj* are known to date back at least to the 6th century CE. These life-giving systems, some 3,000 of which are still active today, use gravity to channel water from precious water resources under or above ground, often over long distances.

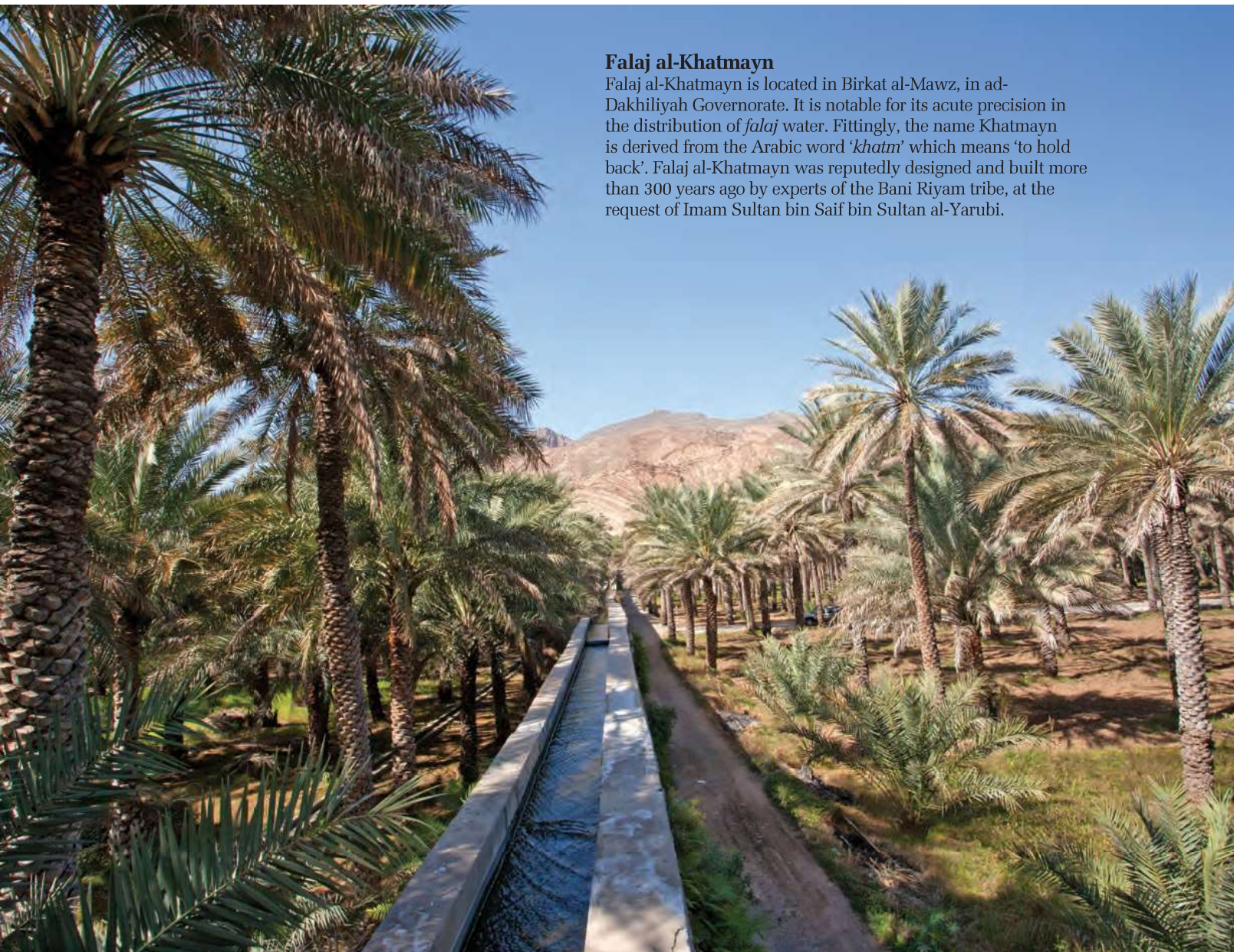
Recent archaeological discoveries suggest that irrigation systems were in use in northern Oman as early as the Bronze Age (3100–2000 BCE). Today, their use for the fair sharing of water in towns and villages continues to be underpinned by

mutual dependence and communal values, and guided by astronomical observations.

In 1427 AH/2006 CE, five Omani *aflāj* were awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in recognition of their exceptional cultural value. These include Falaj Daris, Falaj al-Khatmayn and Falaj al-Malki in ad-Dakhiliyah Governorate, Falaj al-Muyassar in South al-Batinah Governorate and Falaj al-Jeela in South ash-Sharqiyah Governorate.

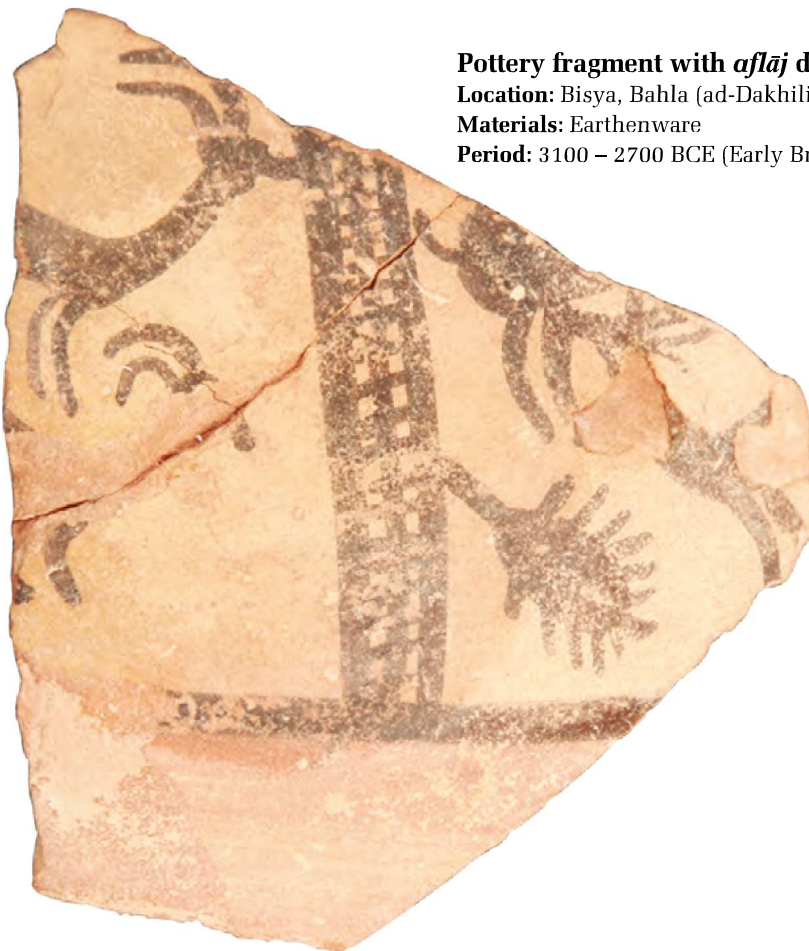
## **Falaj al-Khatmayn**

Falaj al-Khatmayn is located in Birkat al-Mawz, in ad-Dakhiliyah Governorate. It is notable for its acute precision in the distribution of *falaj* water. Fittingly, the name Khatmayn is derived from the Arabic word '*khatm*' which means 'to hold back'. Falaj al-Khatmayn was reputedly designed and built more than 300 years ago by experts of the Bani Riyam tribe, at the request of Imam Sultan bin Saif bin Sultan al-Yarubi.





**Manuscript (*al-azizi falaj log*)**  
**Author:** Rabi'ah bin Majid bin Suleiman al-Kindi  
**Location:** Seiq Town, al-Jabal al-Akhdar (ad-Dakhiliyah Governorate)  
**Materials:** Ink on paper  
**Period:** 8 Rajab 1308 AH/ February 1891 CE



**Pottery fragment with *aflaj* design decoration**  
**Location:** Bisya, Bahla (ad-Dakhiliyah Governorate)  
**Materials:** Earthenware  
**Period:** 3100 – 2700 BCE (Early Bronze Age)

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**The National Museum is open daily from 10:00am – 5:00pm (Friday timings 2:00pm – 6:00pm). The ticket desk closes half an hour before the Museum's closing times.**