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Photo: Olaf Tausch, The Aswan High Dam in Egypt (part.), 2009 (Wikimedia Commons)



International Conference

5-6 February 2026
University of Padua

Sala Bortolami
Palazzo Jonoch Gulinelli
via del Vescovado 30, Padova

WATER MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE MENA REGION

Politics, society, and transnational connections since 1945

Organizers:

Dr. Niccolò Pianciola (niccolo.pianciola@unipd.it)
Dr. Mauro Primavera (mauro.primavera@unipd.it)

DSSGeA
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE STORICHE,
GEOGRAFICHE E DELL'ANTICHITÀ

Water Management and Environmental Change in Central Asia and the MENA Region

Politics, society, and transnational connections since 1945

5-6 February 2026, Sala Bortolami, Palazzo Jonoch Gulinelli, via del Vescovado, 30, Padova

5 February 2026

9.30 - 9.45 – **Opening remarks** – Niccolò Pianciola & Mauro Primavera

9.45 - 10.45 – **Keynote Lecture** – **Elizabeth Bishop** (The American University of Iraq), *Water Management and Environmental Change in Central Asia and the MENA Region: Epistemologies, Geographies, Governmentalities*

10.45 - 11.15 – *Coffee break*

11.15 - 11.45 – **Shah Mahmoud Hanifi** (James Madison University), *A Genealogy of Hydraulic Infrastructure in Afghanistan*

11.45 - 12.15 – **Alaa Mitwaly** (University of Toronto), *The Dialogue of Knowledge: Rooting Sinai Bedouin Hydrological Practice in the Islamic Intellectual Tradition (18th Century to Present)*

12.15 - 12.45 – **Roxana Niknami** (University of Tehran), *From Qanat to Modern Dam: The Interaction of Indigenous and European Knowledge in Iranian Water Management (1950-1979)*

12.45 - 14.30 – *Lunch*

14.30 - 15 – **Xeniya Prilutskaya** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), *Salt of the Earth or Salt of the Soil? Actors, knowledge and visibility of soil salinity in Soviet Kazakhstan*

15 - 15.30 – **Riccardo Mario Cucciolla** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), *A Soviet-Central Asian development model: Agriculture and irrigation projects of the Uzbek SSR in the Third World (1955-1983)*

15.30 - 16 – **Tommaso Trevisani** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), *Life After Cotton? A Century of Cotton Agriculture and the End of the Era of Water Abundance in Karakalpakstan*

16 - 16.15 – *Coffee break*

16.15 - 16.45 – **Mauro Primavera** (Università di Milano), *Iraq and Hydro-Cooperation with the USSR during the Early Republican Period (1958-1968)*

16.45 - 17.15 – **Massimiliano Trentin** (Università di Bologna), *For Development and Status: a Cold War History of the Tabqa Dam on the Euphrates (1953-1970)*

17.15 - 17.45 – **Masha Kirasirova** (NYU Abu Dhabi), *Between Marxist Political Economy and Scientific Geo-Engineering: Soviet Hydrology in Uzbek SSR and Egypt*

6 February 2026

9.30 - 10 – **Kunduz Niiazova** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), *The construction and archaeological excavations of the Great Chüy Canal*

10 - 10.30 – **Askar Djumashev** (Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan), *The Main Turkmen Canal: History of a 'Great Construction Project of Communism', 1950-1953*

10.30 - 11 – **Maria Galmarini** (William & Mary), *"My Work in the Water Management System of Azerbaijan": Ali-Abbas Izmailov and the Memory of Soviet Irrigation Policies in Azerbaijan*

11 - 11.30 – *Coffee break*

11.30 - 12 – **Adnan Mirhanoglu** (Universität Hamburg), *Water and Energy Infrastructure Governance in Northern Kurdistan*

12 - 12.30 – **Madina Gazieva** (Dublin City University), *The reconfiguration of hydrosocial territories in rural Uzbekistan*

12.30 - 13 – **Alessio Resentera & Andrea Zinzani** (Università di Bologna), *Hydrosocial territories in transformation: mountain waters, the state and local communities in Agalik, Uzbekistan*

13 - 14.30 – *Lunch*

14.30 - 15 – **Artemy Kalinovsky** (Temple University), *Citizens, Clients, and Communal Users: Water Payment in Central Asia since Perestroika*

15 - 15.30 – **Irna Hofman** (Leiden University), *Exporting models of development and accessing markets: Understanding Tajik cotton fields as geopolitical sites*

15.30 - 16 – **Görkem Atsungur & Buğra Güngör** (American University of Central Asia), *Foreign Aid and Political Transformation in the Post-Soviet Space: The Case of Water Management in Kyrgyzstan*

16 - 16.15 – *Coffee break*

16.15 - 16.45 – **Yusuke Kawamura** (Kobe University), *Authoritarian Governance and the Politics of Water in Contemporary Egypt*

16.45 - 18 – *General discussion*

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