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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:**

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**DSSGeA**  
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE STORICHE,  
GEOGRAFICHE E DELL'ANTICHITÀ



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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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