



## Theoretical and methodological basis of the history of Central Ferghana irrigation

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Article history:**

Received October 2024

Received in revised form

15 November 2024

Accepted 25 November 2024

Available online

25 December 2024

**Keywords:**

Central Ferghana,  
irrigation,  
land reclamation,  
Andijan,  
Namangan,  
Ferghana,  
methodology,  
hermeneutics,  
method.

### ABSTRACT

The article studies the theoretical and methodological foundations of the history of irrigation in Central Ferghana and reveals the aspects necessary for studying the topic with the help of scientific literature.

2181-1415/© 2024 in Science LLC.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-1415-vol5-iss12/S-pp143-148>

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## Markaziy Fargʻona sugʻorilish tarixining nazariy- metodologik asoslari

### ANNOTATSIYA

Maqolada Markaziy Fargʻona irrigatsiya tarixining nazariy va uslubiy asoslari oʻrganilib, mavzuni ilmiy adabiyotlar yordamida oʻrganish uchun zarur boʻlgan jihatlar ochib berilgan.

**Kalit soʻzlar:**

Markaziy Fargʻona,  
irrigatsiya,  
melioratsiya,  
Andijon,  
Namangan, Fargʻona,  
metodologiya,  
germenevtika,  
Metod,  
девиант хулқ-атвор.

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# Теоретико-методологические основы истории ирригации Центральной Ферганы

## АННОТАЦИЯ

### *Ключевые слова:*

Центральная Фергана,  
ирригация,  
мелиорация,  
Анджидан,  
Наманган,  
Фергана,  
методология,  
герменевтика,  
метод.

В статье изучаются теоретические и методологические основы истории ирригации Центральной Ферганы и раскрываются аспекты, необходимые для изучения темы с помощью научной литературы.

## INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the Soviet state, the historiography of the former Soviet republics completely abandoned communist ideology, and various methods and methodologies appeared in scientific research [1]. It was during the period of independence that the processes of objective analysis of the colonial practice of the Soviet era began. The first President I. Karimov commented on the history of irrigation in the 1960s of Soviet rule and the state of development of protected lands and the quality of water resources as follows: “The quality of water resources is one of the most important problems. Since the 1960s, new lands have been developed on a large scale in Central Asia. Industrial and livestock complexes have been extensively developed. Urbanization has intensified. Collector-ditch systems have been built, and river water has been withdrawn for irrigation in consistently high volumes. Because of this, the quality of water in the basins has been steadily deteriorating” [2]. The research work conducted in this study comprehensively and reasonably analysed theoretical views and considerations on the history of irrigation and land reclamation of Central Ferghana. The construction of numerous large water structures in the Andijan, Namangan and Ferghana regions of Central Ferghana was influenced by the colonial agrarian policy of the centre. These engineering projects were not designed to satisfy the local population's demand for drinking water; rather, their primary function was to facilitate the irrigation of extensive cotton fields.

## RESEARCH METHODS

As noted above, during the Soviet Union, the mass development of new lands gradually accelerated the drying of the Aral Sea. The development of large desert areas in agriculture required a large amount of water resources, and the sources of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya were taken in excess of the norm for the purpose of creating reserves. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, in turn, expressed his views on the socio-economic consequences of the Aral Sea disaster: “One of the most acute environmental problems of today is the Aral Sea disaster. There is no need for further comments on the issue of the Aral Sea disaster. Eliminating the consequences associated with the drying up of the sea requires active coordination of international efforts. It is necessary to develop measures for the full implementation of the special program adopted this year by the UN to provide practical assistance to the population affected by the Aral Sea disaster” [3].

It is estimated that until 1960, approximately 50 km<sup>3</sup> of water from the major Central Asian rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, was routinely utilised for irrigation and the development of new agricultural areas. Within this region, 5.2 million hectares of land were irrigated, with an annual water consumption of around 10,000 m<sup>3</sup> per hectare of cultivated land. However, over the subsequent twenty-five-year period, a further 1.7 million hectares of land were developed in the region, resulting in a complete cessation of the flow of water into the sea. At present, approximately 55 km<sup>3</sup> of water is utilised for irrigation purposes, yet the water consumed per hectare of newly cultivated crops has increased by a factor of 3.5, reaching 35,000 m<sup>3</sup> per annum. [4]. The cultivation of existing irrigated lands in agriculture was also unsatisfactory. In particular, "During the Soviet era, due to the efforts of the republican leadership, as well as significant investments in the Uzbek SSR from the Union budget, large-scale irrigated agriculture developed in the 1960s and 1970s. On the one hand, this allowed the republic to solve the problem of demography and employment to a certain extent by involving a large part of the population in agricultural production. At the same time, mass land reclamation also led to serious environmental consequences: the Aral Sea began to dry up rapidly, large areas became saline and unusable"[5].

Therefore, it has become necessary to evaluate social processes and human history from the perspective of the requirements of modern civilization, to look at the past in terms of today's needs and to give it an appropriate assessment. It should be recognized that one of the modern ways of approaching and perceiving human history is the hermeneutic way of thinking. Hermeneutics (from Greek, *hermeneia*, *hermeneuein* - meaning interpreter) is a set of rules and methods for interpreting existing texts in certain branches of knowledge [6]. This term is one of the branches of philosophy that deals with the general analysis of the conditions of understanding and comprehension, and hermeneutic philosophers examine how, for example, the cultural traditions, history, language, and nature of people, which are of a timeless nature, influence interpretation [7].

The German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), who introduced the term hermeneutics into science, initiated a unique direction in the philosophical understanding of the world, the evaluation of human history and its understanding through philosophical perception of the world [8]. In particular, the hermeneutic philosophical interpretation of history and historical processes is perceived as the level of ability to interpret and understand directly past events in a unique way. In turn, Gadamer emphasizes that in the subject of hermeneutic philosophy, "the study that informs about historical reality consists not only of a set of concrete facts and general ideas, but also of a full understanding of the text formed through the general knowledge of humanity, penetration into its content-essence, philosophical-logical, spiritual-moral concepts, spirit and emotion play a key role" [9].

The scientist posits that true understanding is synonymous with a productive attitude, which in turn facilitates the process of direct historical understanding. The predominant conceptualisation of hermeneutics is that of a theoretical or scientific framework for understanding. In order to comprehend particular phenomena in the real world or to interpret any historical document (in the terminology of hermeneutics), an individual must possess a certain "historical understanding" of the "text" or a certain "beginning of understanding". It is imperative to comprehend the historical context in which one operates, identify the underlying "principles", and strive to understand the

historical situation. This involves analysing the events depicted in the text, and, in essence, "absorbing" the text, "feeling" it, and subsequently interpreting, evaluating, and analysing facts, phenomena, and processes.

The Italian jurist and philosopher Emilio Betti (1890–1968) recognized hermeneutics as a general methodological basis for the spiritual sciences. In 1955, Betti's main hermeneutic work, the two-volume "General Theory of Interpretation," was published in Milan. This published book is a brief and systematically incomplete synopsis of Betti's hermeneutic methodology: the scientist defines the main hermeneutic concepts (meaningful form, presentation, creativity, understanding, interpretation, etc.), reveals epistemological specificity and distinguishes the main types of interpretation, and finally formulates normative rules (canons) of interpretation [10].

Hermeneutic approaches are thematized according to their content and are used in many scientific disciplines: history, archeology, architecture, ecology, international relations, political theory, psychology, religion, sociology, etc. In particular, philosophical hermeneutics is unique in that it systematically deals with the nature of meaning and understanding or interpretation, rather than a separate approach to meaning. Hermeneutics, in turn, is considered in philosophy as the art of understanding history, culture, and other individuality [11].

At the same time, this science is directly concerned with the problems of understanding and explanation. At the same time, Gadamer's hermeneutics is also considered as a philosophical observational ontology of the methodology of existing social sciences. Therefore, in the research work, this methodology was comprehensively applied and relevant considerations were made in understanding and understanding important processes related to the history of the development and irrigation of the Central Fergana reserve. The philosophical-methodological theory that understands hermeneutics as interpretation was developed by the German theologian and classical philologist F. Schleiermacher (1768 - 1834) [12]. Schleiermacher's hermeneutics not only had a historicist nature, but also continued the tradition of considering hermeneutics as a philosophical method by the German philosopher W. Dilthey (1833 - 1911). He approached the hermeneutic interpretation of history in his own way, and he put forward different and more perfect ideas. According to his conclusions, the main problem of understanding history, historical truth and historical processes is to intuitively feel their essence. That is, he approved the need to study them by intuitively entering the social and spiritual environment of that period in the interpretation and perception of any historical reality.

In consideration of the aforementioned significant philosophical concepts, approaches and aspects, it is essential to emphasise that following Uzbekistan's attainment of independence, a comprehensive avenue was established for the objective study and interpretation of historical processes and events. Consequently, the research endeavours have been meticulously directed towards the examination of historical processes during the Soviet period through the lens of hermeneutic thinking. This entails the discernment and interpretation of events during that colonial period in a distinctive manner. It was precisely during the Soviet period that there was a need to study the history of the period of Soviet rule on the basis of the essence of the idea of national independence, to review, honestly describe and analyze the events that took place during it, which were of a historical nature. It is important to note that during the period of Soviet rule, significant

issues in Uzbek historiography were deliberately distorted, interpreted and falsified by order of the centre. In the contemporary context, the imperative to provide a balanced and objective appraisal of the events and historical processes that transpired during the period of Soviet colonialism has attained the status of a matter of state policy. A series of historical decisions have been made in this regard, with a particular focus on the development of historical science. As everyone knows, “Uzbekistan went through a complex and contradictory period of colonialism of the Russian Empire and the Soviet rule, which lasted for more than a century. However, even in such a terrible period, despite all the oppression and tyranny, our people did not lose themselves, their identity. They preserved their language, religion, and faith. Even in such times of injustice and violence, true patriots who lived with the sorrow of the nation and people emerged from our country”[13].

The agrarian policy modeled on the colonialism of the Russian Empire was logically and consistently continued during the years of Soviet power, and the republic, and in particular the Fergana Valley, was transformed into the cotton raw material base of the center, the gross harvest was increased, and the cotton, cocoons, karakul skins, fruits, vegetables, and melons produced were regularly transported to the former Union. The finished cotton product regularly supplied textile enterprises, chemical-pharmaceutical, and military industries in Russia and other European countries with raw materials. It is worth noting that the foundation stone for these efforts was first laid during the reign of the Russian Empire. In particular, the essence of the main ideas of the colonial spirit applied by the Chief Agricultural Officer of the Russian Empire A. Krivoshein to the Turkestan region was reflected in the following: “There are three aspects to this central issue. If in the first the shining inscription is “cotton”, in the second “irrigation”, and finally in the third, although not so conspicuous, the most important of all is the inscription “relocation and settlement of Russian-speaking peoples” [14].

### **CONCLUSION**

Indeed, throughout the entire period of Soviet power, cotton constituted approximately 75 percent of the arable land in all regions. The cultivation of grain and other agricultural crops deemed essential for local sustenance was not implemented. Consequently, all sectors of agricultural production, with the exception of cotton, underwent a substantial decline in many regions. It is evident that such a colonial practice has not been observed in the history of any other country worldwide. The accelerated development and integration of protected and fallow lands in Central Fergana into agricultural use within the framework of the cotton monopoly policy resulted in a substantial augmentation in cotton yields.

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