

# **MOBILITY, CLASHES, MEETINGS: DEVELOPPING OF A NEW ARCHITECTURAL MODEL AT VARDANA WITH THE ADVENT OF ISLAM**

**Ilaria Vincenzi**

Barcelona ES

## **Abstract**

The arrival of Islam in Bukhara oasis introduced into the local building tradition new models of civil architecture such as mosques, ribats and bathhouses. The last ones should have been already adopted by the second half of the 9th century AD, as attested in the Tarikh-i-Bukhara, where it is reported the construction of a bathhouse in the village of Iskijkat. The present paper deals with an early example of 'bathhouse' recently excavated in the Vardana citadel. The unearthed remains consist in simple bath units forming a structure that was built re-using the old walls belonging to the previous pre-Islamic palace, fired at the time of the Arab conquest led by Qutaiba. Although the structure was badly preserved and the general plan not fully understood, it yielded different types of artefacts, such as pottery, coins, glasses and carved baked bricks that confirm its identification as building devoted to bathing or sanitary purposes. Established during the Samanid period, the bathhouse underwent several reconstructions and remained in function until the 12th cent. AD. The modest architectural features that characterize this building, probably related to the peripheral position of the site and to the issues in the local water supply, differentiate it from the more traditional bathhouse models found in Central Asia; at the same time, these peculiarities give us the opportunity to reflect on the different ways a foreign model can adapt itself into the local pre-Islamic building tradition.