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BATH RASP, MOLDED EARTHENWARE

AFGHANISTAN OR EASTERN IRAN; 12TH-13TH CENTURY

L: 10.2; W: 6.7; H: 3.8 CM

The tradition of cleanliness in the Islamic countries was probably one major factor that contributed to Muslim physicians' good results. The Koran requires that the believer carry out ritual purifications each day, and as the many historical *hammams* (bathhouses) show, the public authorities made personal hygiene a priority.

A molded bath rasp like this one was probably a standard feature in Persian baths. The rasp side is covered with little knobs while the concave upper side is decorated in keeping with the region's traditions with mythical creatures (in this case, harpies) against a background of chaotic arabesques.

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