Public access description

This type of carpet is known as a ‘Polonaise carpet’ even though it was made in Iran. The design of this fragment is nearly identical to that of a huge carpet donated to the shrine at Najaf in Iraq, probably by Shah Abbas the Great.

The misleading name arose because carpets of this type came to Europe in the early 17th century through trade or as royal gifts. Many were found in Poland and were later mistaken for Polish products. This gave rise to the term ‘Polonaise carpet’.

Descriptive line

Carpet fragment, silk knotted pile on silk foundation with metal-wrapped thread brocading, ‘Polonaise’ strapwork design on red ground with borders on two sides, probably Isfahan, Safavid Iran, 1600-1625

Physical description

A large rectangular carpet fragment with borders on two sides. Strapwork design in red and yellow silk with gold- and silver-wrapped thread.

Dimensions

Length: 259 cm, Width: 144.8 cm

Museum number

T.36-1954

Object history note

Sold to the Museum in May 1954, by Lady Christabel Aberconway.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O85114/polonaise-carpet-carpet-unknown/