



## ANHALT CARPET

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**ANHALT CARPET**, a medallion rug possibly made in Tabrīz, at the time of Shah Ṭahmāsp (r. 930-84/1524-76). The carpet, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (inv. 46.128), was reportedly discovered in the second half of the 19th century in Dessau Castle, a seat of the dukes of Anhalt, and is believed to be booty from the Turks after the siege of Vienna in 1683 ([PLATE I](#)). Technically it has cotton warps, silk weft and woolen pile and it measures 13'7" by 26'6" (412 x 802 cm). The design consists of a large central medallion with blue cartouches and red pendants on a yellow field bordered in red, blue, and orange. Filling each of these units are intricate multi-colored patterns of floral and arabesque scrolls and cloud bands, which give a somewhat crowded uniformity to the whole. Twelve small peacocks are also set into the field, four at each end and four around the medallion, and these may have some symbolic significance, as they stand with necks extended and heads turned heavenward. All of these motifs recall Safavid decorative arts in other media; the intricate detail, in particular, is typical of manuscript illumination, and it is likely that the carpet design was prepared by an illuminator. The overall composition, the central medallion, and the cloud bands are characteristic of Tabrīz, which was a major artistic center under the Safavids. The carpet's almost perfect state of preservation, which at one time cast doubt on the 10th/16th century dating, has been explained by the belief that it remained in its original Turkish packing from 1683 until in the 20th century.



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