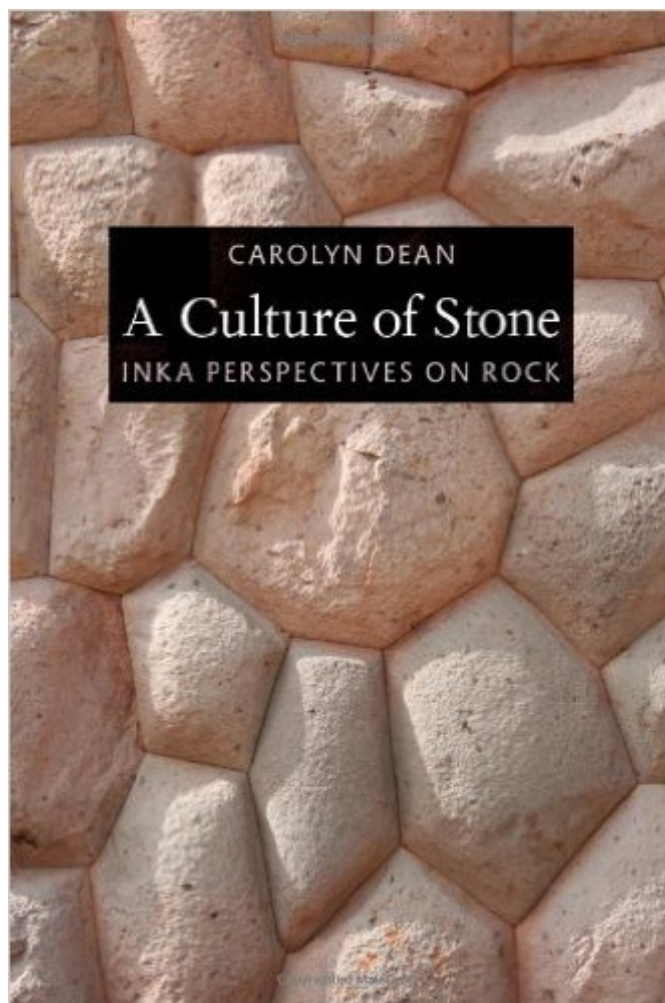


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# A Culture Of Stone: Inka Perspectives On Rock



## Synopsis

A major contribution to both art history and Latin American studies, *A Culture of Stone* offers sophisticated new insights into Inka culture and the interpretation of non-Western art. Carolyn Dean focuses on rock outcrops masterfully integrated into Inka architecture, exquisitely worked masonry, and freestanding sacred rocks, explaining how certain stones took on lives of their own and played a vital role in the unfolding of Inka history. Examining the multiple uses of stone, she argues that the Inka understood building in stone as a way of ordering the chaos of unordered nature, converting untamed spaces into domesticated places, and laying claim to new territories. Dean contends that understanding what the rocks signified requires seeing them as the Inka saw them: as potentially animate, sentient, and sacred. Through careful analysis of Inka stonework, colonial-period accounts of the Inka, and contemporary ethnographic and folkloric studies of indigenous Andean culture, Dean reconstructs the relationships between stonework and other aspects of Inka life, including imperial expansion, worship, and agriculture. She also scrutinizes meanings imposed on Inka stone by the colonial Spanish and, later, by tourism and the tourist industry. *A Culture of Stone* is a compelling multidisciplinary argument for rethinking how we see and comprehend the Inka past.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read this book before, during and after a recent trip to Peru. It was extremely useful as a tool to help me understand the WHY of Inca stonework. A scholarly volume written from the heart that gives credit where credit is due.

Liked it so much that I bought copies for every Peruvian I could think of. The philosophy of the relationship with stone is excellent and so different from what the local guides are telling the tourists. Enlightening.

This is a fascinating book. I am not qualified to evaluate Dean's scholarship other than to say it's convincing, and perhaps her insights are truly original. According to her, the Inka thought rocks were peopleâ | but not all rocks, and not all the time. There's a lot of advanced vocabulary like "lithic embodiments" so get your dictionary out. She does not romanticize the Inka in any way. They were empire-builders who built their famous stone monuments using large amounts of conscripted labor and very limited technology. And even though she presents their beliefs very carefully and eloquently, she never claims to share them.

Not my favorite book. The author assumes that all people in the western world are bafoons who could never appreciate anything as art except sculptures and paintings and the like. While trying to prove that we should all be open minded, the author is judgement and close minded to the fact that not all westerners are dense creatures who wouldn't know art if it was staring them in the face.

Carolyn brings an insight and perspective regarding the stones, their location, and their meaning which would never occur to one without reading her work. Definitely worth it...and more...

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