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Reviews

The New Galleries for "The Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia," the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The permanent "Islamic galleries" of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, closed to the public in 2003 and reopened in November 2011 with the new title "The Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia." (Their closure stemmed from the renovation of the Greek and Roman galleries on the ground floor. The vibrations caused by the movement of heavy equipment and construction posed a risk to the many fragile Islamic objects stored on the upper floors of the museum.) The intervening years allowed for the study and review of the expansive collection, now in excess of 12,000 objects—the closest analog among North American museums to the encyclopedic collections of Europe—and a thoughtful, if prolonged, process of concept design and installation. Navina Najat Haidar served as coordinator of the curatorial project from its inception to completion, with contributions made by other members of the Department of Islamic Art and a succession of senior colleagues who played various roles, including Daniel Walker, Michael A. Barry, Stefano Carboni, and Sheila R. Canby (who has served as Patii Cadby Birch Curator in Charge since 2009). The product of eight years of planning and collaboration among curators, specialists, conservators, and members of the Metropolitan Museum's in-house installation team is nothing less than a stunning re-presentation of the permanent collection that outstrips in scope anything seen there before in quantity of objects—approximately 1,200 are on view—and square footage of gallery space (currently 19,000 square feet).¹ The number of visitors of all ages that I encountered on a recent weekday visit to the Metropolitan confirmed the initial promise that the new galleries would be intensively used and visited. Some months later the newness of it all has not worn off—a good sign.

It is worth noting some essential characteristics of the reinstallation at the outset. In comparison with the modern white walls and sleek museum furniture of the former permanent galleries, which were conceived and realized under the curatorship of Richard Ettinghausen in 1975,² today's galleries are saturated in color, emanating from paint on walls or casework, rich floor cover-

ings of variously hued and naturally patterned stones, or geometric wooden (*mashrabiyya*) and stone-carved (*jalis*) window screens. This new polychrome environment for the most part enhances both the color and texture of individual objects and establishes a marked distinction between the 1975 and 2011 reinstallations, a sharp contrast that is redolent of Dorothy and Toto's dramatic transport from black-and-white Kansas to Technicolor Oz.

The 2011 reinstallation is exquisite and tasteful, bringing its objects into unified and harmonious ensembles (objects are frequently grouped in cases through affinities of color). The new installation revels not only in color but also in the evocation of context, mostly architectural spaces outside the museum's walls. This is realized on a grand scale through period rooms—the 1707 "Damascus Room" and the *mudéjar* Spanish ceiling from the sixteenth century—as well as the new "Moroccan Court" made by a team of craftsmen from Fez that suggests still deeper historical traditions from the western regions of the historical Islamic lands. Elsewhere, historical artworks—glazed ceramic components, stone *jali* screens, carved and molded stuccos, carved wooden doors, and a mosaic tile inlay prayer niche (*mihrab*)—are built into the museum architecture or suspended from walls at different heights to convey how they might have been viewed originally. Modern glass mosque lamps hung from the ceiling in the "Egypt and Syria (10th–16th Centuries)" room indicate how the historical enameled glass lamps in the cases might have appeared when illuminated and viewed from below. There are also arch-shaped portals between some galleries. A nostalgia for places outside and distant from the museum manifests itself in the frequent use of architectural photography to illustrate the accompanying didactic panels that introduce each room. Color and suggested architectural contexts were generally suppressed in the modernist-inflected installations of Islamic art after the 1920s, in Europe and North America, but have steadily reappeared since the late 1970s in permanent installations and temporary exhibitions.³ The scale, scope, and extent of color and context employed in the Metropolitan Museum's 2011 reinstallation, however, mark a radical and definitive break with the white-box principle in which the museum as its own context was ever apparent. While the return to former historical practices and

effects of installation is conducive to the aesthetic affect of the majority of the Islamic artworks on view, creating an integrated presentation—a continuity between objects and museum space—and a pleasurable ambiance and sensory experience, it has broader implications, to which I will return later.

Perhaps more important—but not unconnected to the principles and effects of the new installation—the galleries represent a forceful recommitment to the historical inquiry of the objects of art by displaying nearly 10 percent of the permanent collection. This is a startling, indeed, *staggering* statistic. (The number of objects and density of their display will both require and sustain repeated and prolonged visits.) Objects fashioned from diverse media are presented, including ceramics, metalwork, glass, stone, textiles (including a large number of carpets), the arts of the book, painting in watercolor and oil, drawing, calligraphy, ivory, woodwork, stucco, and lacquer, the examples encompassing the eminently functional, the purely aesthetic, and everything in between. The breadth of subject matters is equally catholic. The visitor is immediately struck by the variety of art on view and a sense of restless artistic experimentation and innovation over time. There are scarcely any technological applications whose attractions might otherwise compete with the direct experience of the objects. Only three interactive computer screens make an appearance, the first in the "Nishapur and the Sabz Pushan Site" room, the second in the "Damascus Room," and the third just outside the "Moroccan Court." Modest as such an approach to technological applications may be, in each instance the monitors perform explanatory functions that enrich their respective displays. Successive screens on the "Damascus Room" monitor present comparative material for the 1707 winter reception room (*qa'a*) as well as information on the disassembly and restoration of the Metropolitan Museum's room in preparation for reinstallation. Our understanding of the "Nishapur and the Sabz Pushan Site" is similarly enhanced by a screen that furnishes information on the city of Nishapur, the Metropolitan Museum's excavations there, the separate archaeological sites, and the finds.

Another defining aspect of the new installation is the *absence* of any effort to impart lessons about Islam, to use the objects as a blunt teaching tool in an exercise about

Muslim religion and Islamic culture. (Such attempts inevitably cause visitors to see through and past the object as they receive the lesson, no matter how well it is construed, as opposed to pondering the formal values and meanings constructed in the artwork.) The tendency to instrumentalize the objects of Islamic art has become all too common since 9/11, especially with the growing, and popular, notion that art could play a role in bridging cultural understanding.⁴ The curatorial team should be congratulated for resisting this expectation and pressure. In fact, the didactic wall panels introducing each of the fifteen rooms at the Metropolitan and the labels accompanying every object, or groups of objects, adopt a decidedly neutral stance without much attempt at interpretation. The introductory room and its text panel give basic guiding themes of Islamic art—the abiding importance of writing, geometry, abstraction, and figuration—alongside the general contexts of the sacred and secular and the mention of patronage groups that encompass the royal court and “the world of trade, commerce, and nomadic and village life.” Each room includes a text panel reviewing the major outlines of the region’s history. Labels for individual artworks contribute basic information on subject matter, authorship, medium, date, and provenance, sometimes with short passages elucidating an aspect of the subject matter and its significance or the use and potential value, or meaning, of the object. In other words, an argument, or even a gathering of a few constant interpretative threads, does not drive the installation, shaping and directing the whole to construct a manifest, overt position about the category of Islamic art. Even the name change of the galleries, a development remarked on as significant by specialists of the field, is not addressed.⁵ If any preconceptions or misconceptions about Islamic art are to be engaged—the museum installation and didactics are mute on this score—it is apparently to be staged through the visitor’s direct encounter with so many hundreds of “silent” objects, whose collective variety might resist formulations even as these ideas are being constituted.⁶

Sequential historical periods, from past to present, subdivided by region, provide the structure for the reinstallation, which unfolds through fifteen rooms. The first eight rooms range in a rectangle around the upper atrium of the Roman art galleries, with the remaining seven rooms forming an L-shaped sequence running along the southern and eastern sides. The new galleries represent a wholly familiar narrative of the history of Islamic art now codified in a series of survey books, but principally shaped in the twin volumes authored by Richard Etinghausen and Oleg Grabar and Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom that divide the chronology into two periods, 650 to

1250 and 1250 to 1800, respectively.⁷ The museum installation closely hews to this framework, simultaneously one of temporal dynastic succession and geographic regions encompassing the historical Islamic lands between the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa in the west and south and Southeast Asia in the east. After the “Introductory Gallery,” the history begins in the seventh century in the gallery devoted to the “Arab Lands and Iran under the Umayyads and Abbasids (7th–13th Centuries),” where the double ancestry of Islamic art in the post-classical and Byzantine traditions of the eastern Mediterranean zone and the pre-Islamic Iranian traditions of the Sasanians is invoked. One of the advantages afforded by the new footprint of the galleries is the continuous circuit wrapped around the upper atrium of the first-floor Roman art galleries. The circuit continues after “Arab Lands and Iran” with rooms assigned to “Nishapur and the Sabz Pushan Site”; “Iran and Central Asia (9th–13th Centuries);” “Egypt and Syria (10th–16th Centuries);” “Iran and Central Asia (13th–16th Centuries);” the “Moroccan Court” (a contemporary fabrication of a traditional North African courtyard); and “Spain, North Africa, and the Western Mediterranean (8th–19th Centuries).”

This spatial sequence not only shapes a cogent presentation of a complex geography and history but also has the advantage of suggesting relations across temporal, geographic, and conceptual axes. While the vertical axis between the Roman and Islamic galleries is simply alluded to by a sequence of wooden window screens open to the atrium and the muffled noise of visitors below—mesh screens beyond these prevent visual access—the alignment of “Egypt and Syria (10th–16th Centuries)” directly communicates with European painting and the sequence of artworks devoted to “European Visions of North Africa.” For the more than casually informed visitor, this spatial correspondence and ease of passage will foster considerations of the growth of Western interest in the Islamic lands, the history of the collection and study of its art in the 1800s, the long shadow cast by Orientalism up to the present day, and, possibly, comparisons between displays of Islamic art in Orientalist painting and the galleries. Another relation is staged between western and eastern Islamic lands through the abutment of “Spain, North Africa, and the Western Mediterranean” and “Iran and Central Asia,” separated by the luminous “Moroccan Court.” The orthodox narrative of Islamic art history constructs a watershed between east and west—with Iraq as the fulcrum—after the death of the Abbasid caliph in 1258 at the hands of the Mongol general Hulegu and identifies an aesthetic realignment in subsequent artistic practice. While the east is subject to a large-scale and transformative exposure to East Asian art, the west contin-

ues the pre-Mongol traditions of its various regions between the lands of Syria and Spain. The Metropolitan’s circuit of galleries unusually and productively brings the two opposing poles into direct confrontation, thus enabling a comparison separated by a few paces.

The rectangular circuit, painted throughout in the same wall color (a yellowy taupe, not always enhancing the objects it surrounds), is enclosed by another suite of rooms arranged in an L shape, which largely follows the floor plan of the 1975 galleries. The L shape comprises the Hagop Kevorkian Fund Special Exhibitions Gallery;⁸ “Carpets, Textiles, and the Greater Ottoman World”; “Art of the Ottoman Court (14th–20th Centuries);” the “Damascus Room (18th Century);” “Safavid and Later Iran (16th–20th Centuries);” “Mughal South Asia (16th–19th Centuries);” and “Later South Asia (16th–20th Centuries).” These larger, less intimate rooms shift the palette of wall paint to red, slate blue, yellow, reddish clay, and brown, but in some instances their boxy shape and scale present challenges to the display of objects that are not easily remedied. Reconciling the size differential between gigantic Safavid carpets and miniature Safavid manuscript paintings and small-scale portable objects is next to impossible, and the dramatic telescoping of optical attention diminishes the intimacy between viewer and object nurtured and sustained in other rooms (such as “Iran and Central Asia [13th–16th Centuries]”).⁹ The range of variously scaled objects in the “Mughal South Asia” room avoids the discordance of the display characteristic of the “Safavid and Later Iran” gallery. Dissonance in the latter results from the installation principle of mixing media adopted throughout the new galleries. The examples of Safavid art available in the permanent collection simply do not permit a smooth gradation of scale from the very large to the very small object.

One of the effects of the temporal layout is to emphasize a linear progression across the regional geographies of Islam, stressing a diachronous model. The fact that several of the rooms typically encompass materials from broad spans of time only underscores diachrony. The installation has not fully exploited ways to reinstate synchrony and highlight local continuities despite political and economic change and wholesale rupture. Two cases, however, step outside a forward-marching teleology and indicate the alternative possibilities afforded by a thematic approach. The first case presents examples of luster ceramics, with specimens spanning the Abbasid and Mongol eras, or the ninth through the thirteenth centuries. One can see how a single technique retained its appeal over time but also how it could produce diverse formal results. Further along, one encounters a case devoted

to "The Signs of the Zodiac" and their application to metalwork, ceramics, and the arts of the book between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Though the main outline of the temporal sequence in the Islamic galleries resembles what was already mapped out in 1975, significant changes have been made.¹⁰ The "Damascus Room"—moved from its former location at the entrance of the 1975 galleries—has been integrated into a more apt geopolitical context by its proximity to the Ottoman galleries. After all, when the room was created, Damascus, and the Arab lands, had been part of the Ottoman Empire since the conquests waged beginning with the reign of Ottoman Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–20). The space once occupied by the "Damascus Room" in the footprint of the 1975 galleries permitted the extension of the original McKim, Mead, and White floor plan of Wing K to offer a more generous space to "Mughal South Asia" and its continuity into the "Later South Asia" gallery (the former location of the 1975 restrooms). This last gallery also marks a key institutional development: the product of cross-departmental collaboration, it reintegrates the Islamic culture of South Asia with the art made by and for a number of confessional groups, chiefly Hindu. Welcome and productive institutional collaborations are also at work in the gallery of "Spain, North Africa, and the Western Mediterranean," which benefits from key, extended loans by the Hispanic Society of America, New York. As one looks to the future—and revisions to the 2011 reinstallation (some of which will be necessary because of concerns over light exposure)—it is also possible to envisage a more robust, expanded interdepartmental collaboration with the Department of Asian Art. Loans of selected examples of East Asian art—for example, paintings and drawings on paper and silk, carved lacquers, and textiles—would enrich understanding of the new aesthetic trends set in place after the Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century, when periods of regular and direct exchange ensued between China, Central Asia, and Iran. (There are a few specimens of Chinese ceramics in the Ottoman and Iran and Central Asia galleries.) Such cross-departmental and institutional initiatives are highly important, for they foreground more complex understandings of Islamic art as something produced synergistically in environments of mixed religions and cultural traditions. This is especially true of the art from the Iberian Peninsula and South Asia, where one cannot fail to see interactions between cultures and faiths in environments of pronounced religious diversity. But many of the same aspects of artistic production and patronage hold true for the entire region of the historical Islamic lands governed by Muslim rul-

ers, where artists and patrons were both Muslim and non-Muslim.

The scope and depth of the Metropolitan's collection of Islamic art—unlike most others in North America, which lack commensurate breadth and depth or that tend to be rich in specific historical periods or media while suffering from sparseness in others—permit multiple scenarios for installation. In this respect, the Metropolitan is the only North American museum that rivals the British Museum in London, the Musée du Louvre in Paris, or the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, which have assembled encyclopedic collections of Islamic art. An expanded discussion of the choices made in the Metropolitan's reinstallation might take a comparative approach and consider how permanent installations of Islamic art have been addressed at other institutions. (And also consider how the current installation principles and history of each institution shape their new galleries of Islamic art.) At this moment, a project is under way at the Pergamon Museum, while recent years have seen the reopening of new galleries at the Musée du Louvre, the Benaki Museum, Athens (2004), the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2006), the David Collection, Copenhagen (2009), and the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (2010), as well as the construction of the new Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar (2008), designed by I. M. Pei. The most direct and relevant comparisons—these would be between the collections owned by the Metropolitan, Musée du Louvre, and Pergamon Museum, which are similar in scope and content—cannot yet be made, however.

What can be said here is perhaps quite obvious: that these reinstallations, stimulated by various political and social forces, impulses and desires, afford crucial opportunities to represent the art of a complex series of historical cultures and to reconceive the category of Islamic art more generally for current and future generations of museumgoers. The Metropolitan's team has succeeded in producing a thoughtful and appealing reinstallation, even though its casting of Islamic art is, at heart, conservative. But perhaps that is as it should be. The reinstallation must have staying power over the next twenty to thirty years, and it is addressed, primarily, to an audience of wide-ranging age, knowledge, and experience. As a specialist, I would close only with the observation that the reinstallation could also be taken as a studied riff on the history of museum installation practice: polychromy and real or simulated historical architectures invoke qualities and features of display before the 1920s, suggesting space, place, or even the intimacy of the collector-amateur's domestic realm, approaching in some instances an ethnographic vector; the implication of conventions associated with archaeological museum display—densely clustered

objects—are found in the single case set at the center of the "Nishapur and the Sabz Pushan Site" room. There are other references to the semiotics of display elsewhere. While these display techniques certainly enhance the artistic and aesthetic power of the objects on view and are clearly mediated through postmodernism, as distinct from direct quotations from various points in earlier museological history, they are not unpacked for the visitor.

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Notes

1. A volume published in conjunction with the opening of the new galleries describes the various individuals responsible for each aspect of the reinstallation as well as the principles and concerns that guided its scope and content. See Maryam Ekhtiar et al., eds., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011). The book also functions as a commemorative volume by including expanded catalog essays for the majority of objects displayed in the inaugural 2011 installation. Another noteworthy publication coinciding with the new galleries is *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp: The Persian Book of Kings*, introduction by Sheila R. Canby (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011). This volume provides the first full-color reproduction of the 258 paintings in the *Shahnama* ("Book of Kings") commissioned by the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76), of which the Metropolitan owns 78 paintings.
2. One of the most thoughtful reviews of the 1975 reinstallation was written by Amy Goldin, "Islamic Art: The Met's Generous Embrace," *Art Forum* 14, no. 7 (March 1976): 44–51.
3. A broad outline of exhibition installation principles can be found in David J. Roxburgh, "Staging the Orient—a Historical Overview from the Late 1800s to Today," in *The Future of Tradition—the Tradition of Future*, ed. Chris Dercon et al. (Munich: Haus der Kunst, 2010), 18–25.
4. See David J. Roxburgh, "After Munich: Reflections on Recent Exhibitions," in *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition "Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst" Reconsidered*, ed. Andrea Lerner and Avinoam Shalem (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 359–86, esp. 381–83.
5. The implications of the name change are discussed at length by Nasser Rabbat, "What's in a Name," *Art Forum* 50, no. 8 (January 2012): 75–78, esp. 78.
6. The principles shaping the selection and grouping of objects for individual vitrines and cases are, for the most part, not explained, just as there is no consistent hierarchy in the labeling of objects in cases. This didactic responsibility is assigned to the objects' capacity to conjure and elucidate the salient connections among them.
7. Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250* (London: Penguin Books, 1987); and Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

8. There have been two rotations since the opening. The first was a tribute to the collectors who have contributed to the growth of the Metropolitan Museum's permanent collection of Islamic art, the second, an exhibition of contemporary Iranian art.
9. A feature of the 1975 galleries, preserved in the 2011 reinstallation, is the often intimate presentation of paintings, drawings, and manuscript folios, displayed in cases at a lower height than most other freestanding cases and those mounted on the walls and up close to the glass. Chairs and benches offer seating—with wooden ledges that are good to lean on—for prolonged and comfortable looking.
10. A historical arrangement of objects by region was already the preferred model in the 1965 installation of Islamic art at the Metropolitan curated by Ernst J. Grube. For other similarities between installation principles developed in 1975 and retained in 2011, see Ekhtiar et al., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art*, 12.

CAROLYN DEAN

A Culture of Stone: Inka Perspectives on Rock

Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010.

320 pp.; 15 color ills.; 53 b/w. \$84.95; \$23.95 paper

Henry Moore famously admired Mexican, and especially Aztec, sculpture, opining: "Mexican sculpture as soon as I found it seemed to me true and right. . . . Its 'stoniness,' by which I mean its truth to material, its tremendous power without loss of sensitivity, its astonishing variety and fertility of form-invention and its approach to a full three-dimensional conception of form, make it unsurpassed in my opinion by any other period of stone sculpture."¹

Moore never saw Inka stonework. If he had, he might have dismissed some of it as just rock, for he would have been blind to the cultural meanings the Inka had invested in that rock. I imagine, however, that, blind or not to Inka cultural canons, he would have been awestruck by the massive polygonal blocks of fine Inka masonry, by the way the Inka integrated living rock into their constructions, by their "echo stones" that replicate and embody majestic mountains, and especially by the subtlety of Inka carving and pounding that imbued stone with a visually perceptible vitality of form. The qualities Moore admired in Mexican sculptures—the "largeness of scale and a grim, sublime austerity . . . [with] some of the character of mountains, of boulders, rocks and sea worm pebbles"²—are also qualities of much Inka stonework.

Indeed, Aztec and Inka stoneworks stand out in the ancient Americas for their monumentality and for the assured handling of form and surface that celebrates rather than obscures the materiality of the object, its "stoniness." The Aztecs carved their stones

into three-dimensional figural images (statues, if you will) or into bold, simple geometric forms whose surfaces they covered with figural relief. Their stone monuments are abstractly representational and conventionally mimetic. In contrast, the Inka eschewed monumental figuration and mimesis; their stones embodied entities, events, and culturally constructed truths but did not represent them figurally; many important Inka stones seem not to have been reshaped by humans at all. This aniconic paradigm, a conceptualization of meaning unrelated to figuration or visually perceived form, sets Inka stonework apart from almost all other pre-Columbian art, despite the fact that the Inka stones participate, like the Aztec carvings, in narrative and ritual discourses. These uncommon features of Inka stonework and the Inka regard for stone have not been fully recognized and understood. Inka stonework is usually discussed in terms of engineering triumph and architectural skill or as a marker of Inka control, but the rich variety of cultural meanings carried by stone is too little appreciated.

Carolyn Dean's book changes this situation in a profound way. She opens our eyes to indigenous Inka conceptions of stone and enables us to understand Inka stonework according not to our own aesthetic sensibilities (Henry Moore or otherwise), but to indigenous Inka cultural perspectives. By drawing on a broad array of stories, beliefs, and practices dating from the pre-Columbian period up to the present, and by employing the rocks themselves as material witnesses, Dean deftly knits together evidence of Inka sensibilities, structures of thought, and practice. The Inka viewed many rocks simply as rocks, petrous objects of the earth, some of which, like pavers or hammer stones, had utilitarian functions. More important, however, the Inka recognized some rocks, a good many rocks, as it turns out, as extraordinary objects—luminous, expressive, and potentially powerful. The Inka esteemed these uncommon rocks as substantiated embodiments of formerly living beings, sacred mountains, and protectors and owners of land, as well as material expressions of a range of cultural values and statements, such as domesticity, reciprocity, and imperial control. Central to Dean's analysis is the distinction she nicely makes between representation and embodiment, a distinction that has also been made by others, to be sure, but which is particularly appropriate to the Inka situation. Extraordinary Inka stones do not represent or even index an absent object or being; they manifest it. Dean's goal in this relatively short book is not a comprehensive study of Inka stonework—there is no catalog of major monuments, for example—but rather an archaeology of Inka thinking about stone. Dean offers a well-reasoned typology of the visual clues by which extraordinary rocks are

distinguished from their surroundings; she analyzes Inka terms that indicate the stones' functions; and she examines how the Inka communicated via stone and employed it in imperial discourses of power. What is striking throughout her study is the irrelevance of visual form to function.

Dean has organized *A Culture of Stone* into a substantive introduction and four chapters with alliterative but telling titles: "Rock and Remembrance," "Rock and Reciprocity," "Rock and Rule," and finally "Rock in Ruins."

The introduction, subtitled "Coming to Terms with Inka Rocks," aptly sets the stage for the analysis that follows. Dean presents key terms found in Quechua (the Inka language, still spoken widely today) that shape her study, such as *waka* or *huaca*, which can be "provisionally defined as a sacred thing, landscape feature, or shrine" (p. 2)—something extraordinary—to which offerings were commonly made. The Inka rocks of Dean's study were all *wakas*. By contrasting the Quechua terms *qillqa* (which translates as "superficial decoration," but was used in the colonial period to refer to figural and nonfigural marks on a surface, including painting and alphabetic writing) and *camay* (essence), she establishes an important distinction between figuration and embodiment that will be elaborated in chapter 1. A brief review of other cultures that recognized rocks as extraordinary extends her study globally; a survey of the literature on Inka stonework anchors her study historically and highlights her goal to recenter "Inka ways of seeing and interpreting rockwork" (p. 18). Especially valuable for pre-Columbianists as well as art historians of ancient and non-Western cultures more generally is her insistence on using indigenous paradigms and perspectives to frame pre-Columbian material culture. She reminds the reader that the distinction between sculpture and architecture has no place in the pre-Hispanic Andes, nor, of course, has the distinction between art and non-art. As Dean points out, although the Inka "made aesthetic distinctions between objects" and valued the objects accordingly, "they did not recognize art as a special category of things" (p. 12). She therefore avoids the non-Inka term "art" and warns against reconstructing "Inka visual culture in the image of the colonizing West" (p. 13).

The core of the book is chapter 1, where Dean lays out two fundamental typologies. The first concerns the visual and constructed strategies that distinguish sacred and potentially animate rocks, the *waka* rocks, from mundane rocks. The second is a looser catalog of terms the Inka used to refer to these rocks according to their function.

Extraordinary rocks, unworked or not, were distinguished by framing, distancing, contouring, and carving. Framed rocks are