



To Weave for the Sun: Ancient Andean Textiles

Rebecca Stone-Miller

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Textiles were the Incas' most prized possessions. Their first gifts to European strangers were made not of gold and silver, but of camelid fibre and cotton. They believed that the highest form of weaving was created expressly for the sun, which they considered the greatest of the celestial powers. This book uses this image to symbolise Andean tradition as a whole and documents the collection of ancient and Colonial Andean textiles in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which is among the most comprehensive of its kind in the world.

Described and illustrated here, in many cases for the first time are the finest examples from the collection: weavings of astonishing virtuosity with striking geometric designs, elaborate carpets and covers, mantles, tunics, featherwork, woven shoes with metal decoration and intriguing figural sculptures with tapestry faces - representing the major cultures of the pre-Columbian period as well as the achievements of Spanish Colonial times. A chronological overview and accompanying essays examine the weavings as primary sources of information about their makers. For archaeologists, ethnographers, textile designers and weavers and all those who appreciate the brilliant artistry of ancient civilizations, the achievement of the weaver as creative artist is both celebrated and explored.

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