

PREFACE

The following survey whose purpose is to supply background information for a better understanding of the iconography of the religions of the native peoples of northeastern North America, was limited to what it is by the format of the series in which it appears. Two paradoxes that apply to every tightly condensed statement of facts such as this are that (1) the number of potential mistakes and errors, either by oversimplification or by the choice of what to include and exclude, and (2) the relative dependence on the work of others both increase with the decreasing length of the text. As to the first paradox, any author will always have to take responsibility for his specific decisions resulting from the primary decision to write such a survey at all; as to the second, the necessary lack of specific references in the body of the text is only partly made up for by the bibliography which—given the vast extent of the literature—had to be limited to works of a monographic nature. Careful readers, however, will certainly be able to detect ideas and influences that derive from (often smaller) publications not listed in the bibliography. The author would like at this point to divest himself of the debt thus incurred by expressing his gratitude to all scholars whose previous endeavors in this field have made the present work possible.

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CHRISTIAN F. FEEST