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Amulets, Effigies, Fetishes, and Charms: Native American Artifacts and Spirit Stones from the Northeast

Edward J. Lenik

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Decorated stone artifacts are a significant part of archaeological studies of Native Americans in the Northeast. The artifacts illuminated in *Amulets, Effigies, Fetishes, and Charms: Native American Artifacts and Spirit Stones from the Northeast* include pecked, sculpted, or incised figures, images, or symbols. These are rendered on pebbles, plaques, pendants, axes, pestles, and atlatl weights, andare of varying sizes, shapes, and designs. Lenik draws from Indian myths and legends and incorporates data from ethnohistoric and archaeological sources together with local environmental settings in an attempt to interpret the iconography of these fascinating relics. For the Algonquian and Iroquois peoples, they reflect identity, status, and social relationships with other Indians as well as beings in the spirit world.

Lenik begins with background on the Indian cultures of the Northeast and includes a discussion of the dating system developed by anthropologists to describe prehistory. The heart of the content comprises more than eighty examples of portable rock art, grouped by recurring design motifs. This organization allows for in-depth analysis of each motif. The motifs examined range from people, animals, fish, and insects to geometric and abstract designs. Information for each object is presented in succinct prose, with a description, illustration, possible interpretation, the story of its discovery, and the location where it is now housed. Lenik also offers insight into the culture and lifestyle of the Native American groups represented. An appendix listing places to see and learn more about the artifacts and a glossary are included.

The material in this book, used in conjunction with Lenik’s previous research, offers a reference for virtually every known example of northeastern rock art. Archaeologists, students, and connoisseurs of Indian artistic expression will find this an invaluable work.

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