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- Langsdorff, George H. von
 1814 *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World during the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, and 1807.* 2 vols. Reprinted in 1968 New York: Da Capo Press.
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The Martis Indians: Ancient Tribe of the Sierra Nevada. Willis A. Gortner. Foreword by Albert B. Elsasser. Woodside: Portola Press, 1986, xxiii + 145 pp., 31 figures, 4 tables, Appendix, Index, \$14.50 (paper).

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This is the second volume by Willis Gortner dealing with the prehistory of the north-central Sierra Nevada. The first volume (Gortner 1984) was concerned with petroglyphs found in the North Fork American River locality, and provided an opportunity for Gortner to present his interpretation of the "who, what, when, where, and why" of this distinctive rock art. The volume reviewed here covers a much broader subject, the Martis Complex (or Martis Tribe, as Gortner refers to it), and represents Gortner's synthesis of information concerning this enigmatic archaeological complex.

Chapter 1 begins with a brief consideration of how the Martis Complex came to be recognized and the principal features that distinguish it archaeologically. The more well-known archaeological studies are referenced, along with radiocarbon dates to establish the time frame for the Martis

Complex. In Chapter 2, Gortner examines the origins of the complex and explores various arguments relating to whether the Great Basin or California was the ancestral homeland of the Martis culture. Chapter 3 presents evidence concerning the relationship of Martis to later complexes and ethnographic groups. Chapter 4 contains a lengthy discussion of neighboring "tribes" who lived at the time the Martis Complex flourished in the north-central Sierra Nevada. Chapters 5 through 9 are devoted to discussions of Martis subsistence patterns, homelife, and social and religious practices.

Archaeologists will particularly enjoy the Foreword by Albert Elsasser in which he describes, in anecdotal fashion, his early work with Robert Heizer and the unfolding of the concept of the Martis Complex.

Gortner is an amateur archaeologist who has spent many summers exploring the upper reaches of the North Fork of the American River. The book is directed toward the layman and other amateur archaeologists in order to fill what the author rightly sees as a void in the literature on the prehistory of California. Despite recurrent pleas within the archaeological community to do a better job of communicating archaeological knowledge to the public that supports our work, we fairly consistently fail to do so. Gortner recognizes this shortcoming and is critical of archaeologists for their failure to go beyond mere description of archaeological sites and artifacts to syntheses that present a picture of the culture responsible for the archaeological materials being studied. To reach this level, according to Gortner, requires that archaeologists must indulge in intuitive speculation to fill the inherent gaps in the archaeological record and tell the whole story.

Gortner's treatment of the Martis Complex includes ample evidence of intuitive speculation, as well as facts drawn from the

archaeological literature. Those accustomed to traditional archaeological literature will frequently feel uneasy as they peruse the book. The presentation fluctuates between a fairly straightforward synthesis of published archaeological data to one in which the author champions particular points of view based upon his interpretation of the published data and additional data he has collected during his explorations in Martis country. His own data are primarily projectile points (more than 500) he has collected over the years and observations on site distributions and assemblages which are presented in a general fashion throughout the book.

An archaeologist, particularly one knowledgeable about the Martis Complex, will find it difficult to resist being critical on theoretical, methodological, or factual grounds; however, it must be remembered that this book was *not* written for archaeologists.

Rather, Gortner's objective was to educate and provide enjoyment for a lay public that generally lacks knowledge about California prehistory, let alone complexes, artifact classification, and archaeo-linguistic reconstructions. When viewed in its proper context, Gortner's book is an impressive achievement. He demonstrates a surprising familiarity with the widely scattered and essentially obscure literature on the Martis Complex, as well as a grasp of general archaeological concepts. Above all, he succeeds in communicating a vast amount of information in a form and with a style that will make for enjoyable reading for that portion of the public that archaeologists have not succeeded in reaching.

REFERENCE

- Gortner, Willis A.
1984 Ancient Rock Carvings of the Central Sierra: The North Fork Indian Petroglyphs. Woodside: Portola Press.

