

EDITOR'S CORNER

A colleague sometimes refers to archaeologists as the “cowboys of science.” In a way I like this image. I can imagine us around a campfire: tough, resilient, liking animals but knowing how to keep them in their places, etc.

Lately though I've been thinking that maybe archaeologists are really the accordion players of research—or perhaps that we are in danger of being so viewed. I'm worried that ours may be seen as a portable or even a folk craft: definitely not fit for Carnegie Hall, though possibly good enough for times and places where you can't bring the piano. Not quite respectable, but perhaps a notch above the banjo? As Georges Brassens sang, in his lament on the death of a corner accordionist, “Le Vieux Léon”—

*C'est une erreur
Mais les jouers
D'accordéon
Au grand jamais
On ne les met
Au Panthéon....*

Rousseau, Voltaire, Marie and Pierre Curie all ended up there, of course, but to the best of my knowledge, the Pantheon (Figure 1) houses the remains of no archaeologists, either.

There are nevertheless signs that archaeology is achieving recognition beyond the confines of our own discipline for our ability to place the current state of humanity—so eloquently distilled by Peter Raven (2002)—in its appropriate long-term context. One symptom of this is the participation of archaeology in several recent NSF grants under the Biocomplexity in the Environment program (and particularly its Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems area). This issue's Forum, coauthored by Sander van der Leeuw (Université de Paris 1-Panthéon-Sorbonne) and Charles L. Redman (Center for Environmental Studies, Arizona State University) similarly explores an appropriate role for archaeology in providing leadership to large interdisciplinary teams formed to understand and model long-term change in human and natural systems. In their own careers they have found this to be a useful way for archaeologists to escape the role of accompanist.

In our July issue papers by Kuckelman et al., and Kolb and Dixon presented (quite different) evidence for prehistoric warfare in the U.S. Southwest and Hawai'i. Stephen Lekson continues this theme here by considering whether conflict in the Puebloan Southwest corresponds to one general theory of warfare. In a Book Review Essay next January, Stephen Plog will ask, and try to answer, why there is so much interest in warfare among archaeologists at this moment.

Sometimes editors may see themes that are less easily discovered, or perhaps aren't even there! This happens most often in the last stages of reading galleys. Nevertheless, I would propose that readers juxtapose the papers herein by VanPool and Leonard, and by Kozuch, for what they both have to say about the

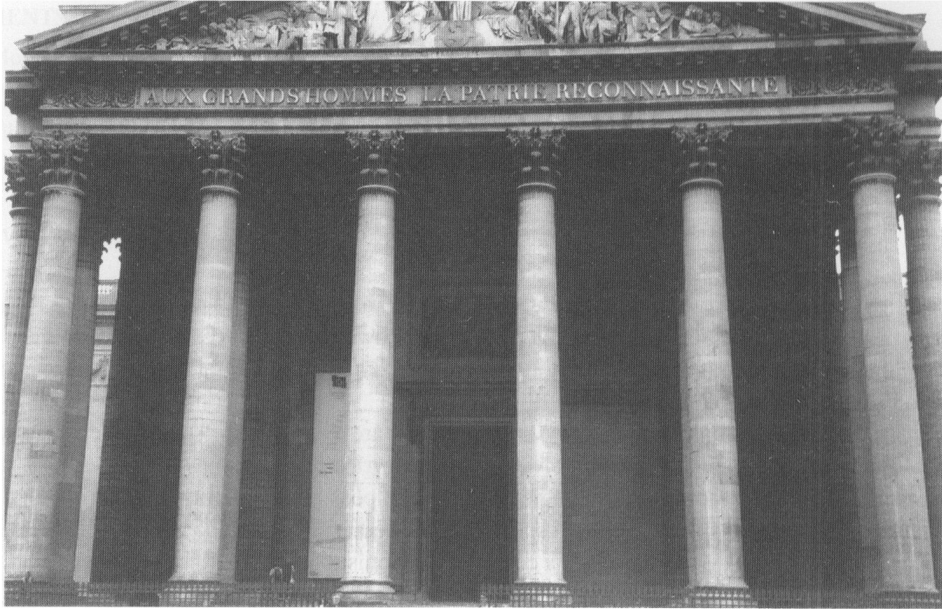


Figure 1. Pantheon, Paris. Note archaeologists on outside (photo by Claire Kohler).

impressive scale of commercial connection in the late prehistoric southern tier, stretching from the Gulf of California to the western margins of the Southeast.

As I write this, graduate students and faculty alike are in a flurry assembling symposia, papers, and abstracts for the 68th annual meeting of the society in Milwaukee, April 9–13, 2003. I hope you are among them. If I fail to thank you in person there for any reviews you may have provided so far during my editorship, I hope you will forgive me: over 700 of you (minus a few duplicates—you know who you are!) fall into that category. Without your hard and un-self-interested work this journal could not happen. Thanks, and by the way: Hold the accordion jokes.

—TIMOTHY A. KOHLER

References Cited

- Raven, P. H.
2002 Science, Sustainability, and the Human Prospect. *Science* 297:954–958.