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**Cover:** Divers lift a canon from the wreck of the *Astrolabe* that sunk during the famous La Pérouse expedition in 1788 off the Island of Vanikoro, Solomon Islands. Underwater heritage is becoming an increasingly political arena for modern nation states, and the political context of recent Chinese heritage investigations in the South China Sea is the focus of the article by Perez-Alvaro and Forrest in this issue. Image © P. Larue, reproduced courtesy of UNESCO.

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