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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Worthy of editorial comment is the continued practice, among many anthropologists and institutions, of laying monopolistic claim to a particular ruin, culture, area, village, tribe, people, language, cult, or other entity, and of growling like the dog of fable whenever another individual or organization enters this "pre-empted" domain. Usually these monopolists rationalize their claims on the basis of priority of field work or of publication, or because the thing claimed falls within their geographic area or within the scope of their declared fields of investigation. Such an attitude possesses a certain quality of exalted conceit, since the corollary of this attitude is the implicit assumption that no other institution or individual is so well qualified. It probably is asking too much of human nature to request that such "property rights" be yielded altogether, but at least a certain amount of annual "assessment work" should be performed in order to maintain the claim before the scientific world. Should this include both field work and publication (in form of preliminary or progress report) each year, it might do much towards discouraging those flea-like individuals who jump incessantly from one item to another with only a passing bite in any one place. The demand for field work each year would tend to eliminate the writing of numerous articles that wring every possible bit of blood from the scant meat of but one season's work. Publication is necessary since otherwise the scientific field worker, back from his excavating, collecting or what-not, is in no better standing than the untutored shepherd, cowboy, or prospector, who knows the particular area better than ever will the savant; nor is this scientist (be he collector of artifacts or of ideas) much better than the well-known packrat.

D. D. B.