

The Great Toponymic Divide. Reflections on the definitions and usage of endonyms and exonyms, ed. by Paul WOODMAN, published by the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography, Warszawa 2012, ISBN 978-83-254-1967-7, 302 p.

The book contains papers presented at the 12th Meeting of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms in Gdańsk, Poland, in May 2012. The papers deal with the endonym/exonym divide (“The Great Toponymic Divide”), exonym analysis and usage, endonyms and exonyms in minority language environments, and an endonym/exonym illustration from history.

Running as a thread through many of the papers is the suggestion that, even after ten years and twelve sessions, the Working Group remains not entirely certain as to the optimum definitions of the terms ‘endonym’ and ‘exonym’. This admission may come as a surprise, but it is an apt reflection of the relative novelty and sheer complexity of this most challenging of subjects.

Having considered the contributions in this volume, the reader may well form the opinion that fine-tuning the present UN definitions into a durable form ought to constitute the main focus of activity for the Working Group in the near future.

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Thanks to the generosity of the Polish Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography the book is available free of charge. Should you be interested to receive a copy, please approach Peter Jordan (peter.jordan@oeaw.ac.at).

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