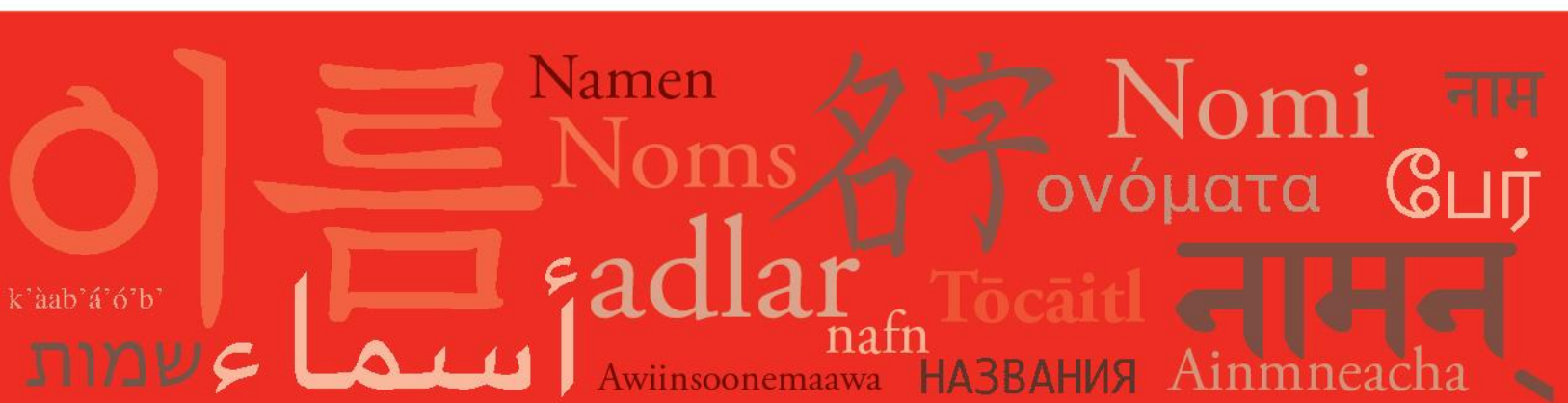


Names | A Journal of Onomastics



In Memoriam: Dorothy E. Litt (1921-2014)

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“Your name from hence immortal life shall have...” Shakespeare Sonnet 81¹

Dorothy E. Litt was born in New York City, New York on October 12, 1921. During that time in US history, the professional opportunities for women were severely limited. Despite those restrictions, Dorothy would rise to become a tireless advocate for women’s rights and trailblazing academic scholar. A long-time member of the American Name Society, Professor Litt’s primary research interest was literary onomastics. Within that area, she published numerous articles on names and naming during the Renaissance— a period of time marked by revolutionary advances education, science, and the arts brought about by geniuses whose creativity still inspire us today. There was Italy’s Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519) and the Netherlands’ Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1466- 1536), France’s Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Prussia’s Mikołaj Kopernik (1473-1543) and Spain’s Doménikos Theotokópoulos (1541-1614), who are better respectively known today as *Nicolaus Copernicus* and *El Greco*. Given her own unique combination of intellect, humor, tenacity, and creativity, it comes as little surprise that Professor Litt found herself attracted to this period of history.

Over the course of her long and impressive career, Dr. Litt established herself as a leading expert in Renaissance literature with a specialization in onomastics. Among her many scholarly publications is the classic, *Names in English Renaissance Literature* (ISBN-10: 0773473971) which contains a fascinating 18 essays written on names and naming in Elizabethan literature. In addition to this book, she also

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published numerous scholarly articles in some of the world's leading onomastic journals. In *Literary Onomastics Studies*, for example, her publications include "Women's Names in English Renaissance Elegy" (1988), "Namelessness in English Renaissance Drama" (1986), and "Place-Names in Shakespeare's Grand Design for the Henry VI Plays" (1987). She was also a regular contributor to *NAMES*. Two excellent examples of her publications in this journal include "The Power of the Name Essex in 3 Henry VI" (1986) and "The Poetics and Politics of Naming: The Case of Sir Walter Raleigh and His Queen" (1991).

As the titles of these works allude, Professor Litt's research was as varied as it was dynamic. However, her one true passion Stratford-upon-Avon's favorite bard, William Shakespeare. Throughout her professional life, she remained an active member of the Shakespeare Association of America and regularly taught courses in Shakespearean and Renaissance literature at SUNY Stony Brook and Lifetime Learning Programs in Newton and Wellesley. At the same time, she worked as a librarian at Radcliffe College's illustrious Bunting Institute. A true Renaissance woman herself, Dr. Litt's passions were not limited to the confines of the university, however. She was also a deeply devoted mother and grandmother. In March 27, 2014, this beloved family matriarch and much appreciated onomastic scholar passed away peacefully at the age of 92.

This year, a personal collection of Dr. Litt's books, articles, and digital files was graciously donated by her daughter to ANS Member, Dr. Lisa Berglund, Professor and Chair of the English Department at SUNY Buffalo State College. Also a literary onomastician, Dr. Berglund regularly teaches courses in Shakespeare herself and warmly welcomed the unexpected donation. This gift will no doubt become instrumental in helping to educate and inspire many future generations of students—thereby helping to secure the rich scholarly legacy of a wonderful feminist and name scholar.

Dr. Dorothy E. Litt is survived by her daughter Jane Saks; her son and daughter-in-law Roy Edelstein and Jean Fein; her granddaughter, Brianna Saks; and a great grandson. The American Name Society expresses its deepest gratitude to Ms. Saks for her most generous gift and extends its sincere heartfelt condolences to the family for the loss of their loved one.

Notes

¹ Duncan-Jones 2010, 273.

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