

PREFACE

"Must a name mean something?" Alice asked doubtfully.

"Of course it must," Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: "my name means the shape I am--and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost."

Lewis Carroll

Through the Looking-Glass

Like Humpty Dumpty, literary onomasticians find a great deal of meaning in names. Papers presented at the Twelfth Annual Conference on Literary Onomastics, June 4-5, 1984, in Rochester, New York, and printed in this volume, use a wealth of interpretive techniques--from etymology, geography and biography through runic mysticism--to unfold these meanings. But, as Leonard R. N. Ashley warns in the first paper herein, enthusiasm needs to be tempered with caution. Otherwise, like Humpty Dumpty, onomasticians might stipulate meanings that do not exist. Fortunately, the scholars in this collection stay above this danger.

It is pleasant once again to give thanks to those who support the Conference and the journal: to the speakers, section leaders, and guests (of course); to Laura Day and Margaret Ekstrom, Conference Executive Secretary and Associate Secretary respectively; and to our colleagues at the State University of New York College at Brockport: Robert J. Gemmett, Dean of Letters and Science; David G.

Hale, Chairperson of the Department of English; Victor Rojas, Chairperson of the Department of Foreign Languages; and Linda Krieger, Patricia Sauro, and Richard Black, and their staffs, of the Office of General Support and Printing Services. To each and all, our thanks.

The Editors

