

**GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ORIGINS OF ENGLISH IDIOMS
WITH A PROPER NAME CONSTITUENT**

A Study Based on their Etymology as Available in the Typical
Compilation

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ABSTRACT

The data consists of the one hundred English idioms with a proper name constituent, occurring most frequently in the ten final sources containing the most PN idioms among the twenty original works, whose 500 idioms are also used for numerical comparisons.

The aim of this thesis is to chart the terrain of modern English proper name idioms, i.e. to find their general features: where they derive from, in what forms and structures they normally appear, how they are located in British and American geography, and what type of sphere of activity and attitudinal tone they represent. This study also seeks to find out what information is given in the data on each person or locality that has lent its name to the idiom. To this end, three aspects for each idiom were checked in the idiom compilations (the sources), and the Oxford English Dictionary (the reference work): definition, etymology, and the first quotations of actual use.

By information value, the sources studied fell into three categories: 1) those seldom extending beyond the definition (OxfId, ChambId, LongId), 2) those adding to the definition some sort of derivation (R&S, CollId, Noble), and 3) those defining, deriving, and usually also 'backlighting' the idiom from various perspectives (Brewer, M&M, Hunt, and Funk).

In summary, the typical source is likely to enhance the general reader's conception of some of individual idioms, but is equally likely, on the whole, to leave the inquisitive (etymologically-minded) student rather dissatisfied: the mean grade scored by the ten sources was 2.04 out of the maximum of 3. The mean value of the best presentations for each idiom, however, amounted to 2.66 as against the 2.47 attained by the OED, implying that an idiom dictionary of sound overall quality will at best be equal, even superior, to the OED in terms of information value.

Findings on the Oxford English Dictionary showed that, inevitably, it has its imperfections - even failures - proving its vulnerability. Yet, in contrast with these inadequacies, it was found on several occasions to excel any of the ten sources in its accurate, factual, and reliable information.

This thesis also showed that the 'birth-date' of a proper name idiom is seldom fixable to an accurate year, let alone month or day. Instead, it typically requires several years to gain popularity, and often a decade or more to become established. This aspect is perhaps partly due to an idiom's frequent birth as a word of mouth, put forth to meet a given discursal challenge; it is often a great deal later that the idiom finds its way into literary use; hence, it is usually difficult to pinpoint an idiom back to a certain date.

In addition, certain structural patterns emerged from the studied proper name idioms, outstanding certain others: person name idioms over place name idioms, idioms with a British names over those with non-British ones, idioms with first names over those with other name classes, noun phrase idioms over idioms with other phrase types, male name idioms over female name ones, negative idioms over neutral ones, and neutral idioms over positive ones, whether male or female.

These patterns in the data would deserve a systematic study on a large corpus, with a view to establishing the extent the present findings would coincide with the new observations. It would be of equal interest to find to what extent the structural typology developed for this thesis (the matrix) would conform to that yielded by such a massive corpus. All these interesting issues remain, however, to be investigated by future research.

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I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. BACKGROUND

"No one, whether of low or high degree, goes nameless once he has come into the world; everybody is named by his parents the moment he is born", is written in Homer's Odyssey (VIII, 11.552-4). This fact, stated some three thousand years ago, still fascinates minds like the present author's; for it is the very uniqueness of a proper name, whether given to a person or place, uniqueness carrying some special mysticism inherent in it that separates each and every named individual from the 'grey mass' of all nameless things.

Language, then, as a mental medium, is a fascinating phenomenon - perhaps the most intriguing of the qualities particular to humanity. A few black dots on white can amount to such tremendous impacts as transforming an individual's whole life: his or her thought, attitudes and mode of experience; "Your sins are forgiven, go in peace" have worked miracles among us for two millennia. This, of course, is not an outcome of mere words; words contain power only as much as the thought behind them is powerful. Yet, the present writer has been captivated, instead of semantic power, by semantic reference and its uniqueness: the realm of proper names, which refer to a single person or place. His original interest was aroused at grammar school, when '*carrying coals*

to *Newcastle*' and *'Hobson's choice'* came forth on the pages of English textbooks.

Further interest in proper names in English idioms was inspired by some idiom compilations, most notably the three-volume Book of English Idioms by V.H. Collins. When studies carried the student to the university, this interest took the form of finding out the origins to these many-faceted expressions, the origins of the persons and places that had lent their identities to such phrases.

The next step was to collect an adequate number of such compilations of English idioms with a proper name constituent. The ideal domain for such a collection was thought to be the department library at Helsinki University. There the present research project was launched: the literary collections were charted and run through, with the outcome of some 40 books containing English idioms. (All these are listed in the bibliography; first the final selection of ten works with 100 idioms (or 'Dictionaries of idioms studied systematically'), and, next, the preliminary gathering of the 26 works ('Other dictionaries of idioms consulted in the course of the study') remaining after the exclusion of the above.)

At the next stage, some twenty compilations were found to cover at least some aspects of idioms with a proper name constituent to qualify as source material. A careful study of these rendered close to 500 items with a proper name element.

The discovered wealth of proper name idioms, as they will be called for short from now on, was amazing. In addition, they were found to be of vastly varying types and forms, and related to greatly varying cultural connections and periods of time. With a number as large as this, especially with a view to crosschecking the idioms against the Oxford English Dictionary data at several points, some modes of exclusion proved necessary.

In other words, criteria were to be created for determining an adequate and appropriate amount of source material in terms of idiom entries. These appeared to be twofold, and somewhat conflicting: it was imperative, first, to ensure that the conditions of validity and reliability were met, and second, to keep the workload of conducting the designed analysis within limits of manageability. In this context, this meant a manageable workload for one person requiring no quantitative statistical runs by computer. In this perspective, a total mass of 500 entries appeared to lie towards the outer limit of viability, particularly as the investigative scope of 200 to 300 items was generally recommended for this kind of approach (Heikkilä 1998, 32). The latter scope might possibly risk the ambitious aim of reaching a well-represented overview to the world of the English idiom with a proper name.

For several reasons certain limitations were then clearly necessary. The first step was to make a continuous

effort to keep the sample as 'modern' as possible - now more than a decade ago, that is - and for this purpose all idioms containing an 'aged', i.e. obsolescent, if not altogether obsolete, proper name, such as biblical, to name but one type, were discarded. This method, of course, was rather crude, since quite modern and fully 'live' idioms have been since constructed from 'aged' names whether biblical or 'ancient' in some other sense, exemplified by "*There's no leaping from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom*". In short: the idioms of this study were to be found in the usage of the educated British speakers in the latter half of the twentieth century, as far as was determinable from the publication dates of these sources as well as from the introductory notes by their authors.

Thus 'updated', the material still numbered some 300 items. With a number like this, further forms of limitation were necessary to delimit the study itself practicable with a solid purpose. The concluding method of limitation was to concentrate on the most frequent: the hundred most popular; namely those that were most frequently listed in the ten compilations finally selected. Now the final material was available, gaining the compact working title 'Top Hundred'. The precursory gathering, used as a comparison material for all quantitative analyses, is, in short, referred to as the 'Five Hundred'.

For the sake of clarity, since the study contains a plethora of allusions to idioms, on one hand, and to the compilations, or idiom dictionaries, containing them, on the other, (allusions to) idioms themselves have been italicized, while (references to) the works themselves have been underlined. Two compilations consisting of two or three volumes were each treated as one, namely Collins's Book of English Idioms, and The Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English. The sources are listed the 'Works Cited'.

II. AIMS OF THE STUDY

One of the two main aims of this pro gradu thesis is, as much as possible within the scope of a general study, to chart the terrain of modern English idioms with a proper name element, i.e. to find their general features: where they derive from, in what forms they normally appear, how frequent they are in comparison with other English idioms, how they are located in British and American geography, and what type of sphere of activity and attitudinal tone they represent. All these aspects are discussed finally in Section VIII, Lexical Features.

The second main aim of this thesis is to find out for the general reader what information is given in the source data on each person or locality that has lent its name to an idiom. These findings will help anyone potentially interested in the English proper name idiom to find the sources that are etymologically the most interesting among the assessed works (these are briefly discussed in Section IX.1.).

It is my presupposition that the historical or background data, especially etymological details, presented in the average idiom book will not be too comprehensive or detailed, since each of the works is a general compilation of the commonest English idioms, with the obvious exception of Hunt, and Noble, which both are more of a general reader on the subject of historical personages behind various sayings,

including proper name idioms. Brewer, then, is more of a historical work of reference, which, however, contains a wealth of phrasal idioms. (Despite this heterogeneity, the sources are, for reasons of uniformity, here termed as idiom dictionaries, or idiom compilations, even if their basic editorial principles may vary a great deal.)

The informative value of each source is compared against as authoritative source as possible, which, for this purpose, appeared to be the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the second edition of which (1989) was available for this study. An interesting finding was made along its continued consultation: authoritative as though it first appeared, its data was often found scanty and economizing to the point of what is judicially known as 'justifiable defence', namely that of its authoritative status. A number of details instancing this will be presented in Sections VII.2. and VII.3.

As noted earlier, one of the central issues investigated in this study is the availability in the average idiom compilation of data on the background, derivation and any other relevant historical detail connected with the personage or locality that has lent its name to the idiom studied. To ensure unambiguous assessment of the coverage of each idiom in each source, i.e. idiom dictionary or compilation, the following three criteria were adopted for this examination. First, what is known of the historical person or location

that lent its name to the idiom. Second, the 'birth date' of the idiom, preferably down to the nearest year or two, half a decade at the most. And third, what additional background data is furnished, if any. These criteria are then each awarded one point, the scale thus reaching from nought to three. This proved to be a practical and convenient guide for anyone interested in the subject to roughly evaluate the overall coverage of details offered by each source.

As for the actual 'truthfulness' of the data, the writer has found it really difficult, if not impossible, to reach any unambiguous and undisputable proof. Yet repeated efforts towards this goal have been made, as this was one of the leading guidelines for the study to start with. This objective proved an unattainable aim; the sole prudent solution appeared to be a comparison with the data to be found in the OED. For each idiom included in the study, the following aspects were examined in the OED: 1) definition, 2) etymology, 3) first quotations of each idiom in actual use, whether in speech or writing. As noted above, some additional observations such as findings on dating, frequency, localization, associated field of activity, and attitudinal content are presented in Section VIII.

III. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

CONCEPTS RELEVANT FOR THE STUDY:

III.1. GENERAL DEFINITIONS

The concept *idiom* appears to defy definition. A typical, and not dramatically powerful among those presented in the selected compilations reads: "[In them] the sense of the whole cannot be arrived at from a prior understanding of the parts", in OxfId. And, another work of reference adds: "because these expressions are, in the broad sense, metaphorical, one cannot usually discover their meanings by looking up the individual words in an ordinary dictionary; because they are more or less invariable or fixed, both in wording and in certain grammatical ways, they cannot be changed or varied in the way literal expressions are normally varied, whether in speech or writing" (LongId).

Rosamund Moon (1998) tackles the problematic field of defining an idiom as follows: "Idiom is a unit that is fixed and semantically opaque or metaphorical, or, traditionally, 'not the sum of its parts', instancing this formulation with *kick the bucket* and *spill the beans* (p.4). Condensed, this definition can be paraphrased as follows: "A lexical complex which is semantically simplex", as formulated by Cruse (1987,37).

Each English idiom studied in this thesis carries a *proper name* constituent. What, then, is a proper name - as distinct from a common noun or appellative? Briefly, a name is "a word or group of words used to refer to an individual entity, real or imaginary, *singling out this entity by directly pointing to it* - not by specifying it as a member of a class, as distinct from a common noun" (EB XXIV,728).

III.2. SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS

The term *idiom* derives from *idioma*, Greek for 'peculiarity' (Fleischer 1982,8). And, indeed, idiom has several properties justifying this designation; these are studied later on. The term itself has a twofold meaning, as appears from Moon (1998,3).

"First, idiom is a particular manner of expressing something in language, music, art etc., which characterizes a person or group:

'...the most fantastic [performance] I have seen in the strict idiom of the music hall comedian.'

Second, idiom is a particular lexical collocation or phrasal lexeme, peculiar to a language:

'The French translations, however, of my English speeches were superb, except for rare instances where the translator was unfamiliar with some out-of-the-way English idiom I had used.'

(both quotes from Moon 1998,3)

There have been a number of attempts to define the term - in the latter sense - usually compressible to the extent that "an idiom is something like words belonging together the meaning of which is not the sum of its parts". There are both stricter and broader classifications of idioms: the former accept as idioms only strings that are, first, "lexico-grammatically fixed" - term by Moon (1998,7) - (i.e. have restrictions on aspect, mood, or voice, for instance) and are "semantically opaque or metaphorical", as Fernando and Flavell (1981,passim) and Cowie (1988,133) put it. These former expressions are sometimes called **pure idioms** (ibid.). Those adopting a broader view are represented by Makkai, whose idiom covers "non-compositional polymorphemic words such as *blackbird* and also collocations and constructions that are not freely formed" (Makkai 1972,191). Hockett goes yet 'broader', accepting even single morphemes, as their meanings are indeducible (1958,171 ff.).

As for this study, a broader view was adopted than those by Moon (1998,4-5) or Cruse (1987,37), for instance, who both consider as idioms only "semi-transparent or opaque

metaphorical expressions". The definition by Lipka of idioms being "formally complex linguistic expressions whose meaning is not derivable from that of their constituents" (Lipka 1990,96), furnished with the addition "not" **entirely** "derivable" is the concept espoused in this study. This preliminary stipulation is made to make room for strings that are not classified as idioms by 'purists', but yet serve the purpose of this paper just as well as the so-called 'pure idioms', since the material found in the typical dictionary invariably consists of both types.

Another important stipulation for the selectional criteria, corollary to the definition freshly arrived at, concerning material eligible for the present investigation, is semantical; namely that an idiomatic compound appearing as one lexeme, is also accepted as an idiom, if it, on closer scrutiny, reveals itself as consisting of two or more 'independent' elements - having a meaning of their own - one of which may sometimes have become ellipted. Such cases are illustrated by *tomboy*, *Marplot*, *Drawcansir*, *Needham*; and, in ellipted forms, *Aggies* [<Aggie Westons], *Donnybrook* [<Donnybrook fair], *bristols* [<Bristol cities].

As a note of conceptual specification, the term 'British idiom', or 'American idiom', and so forth, is, on the pages of the present thesis, used in the sense of an idiom *indicating a British or American person or place*, i.e. one *not necessarily* of British or American origin or usage.

As for proper names, some more elaborate theoretical definitions have been evolved, such as: "A proper name is word in which the identifying, and consequently the distinguishing, power of the word-sound is exhibited in its purest and most compelling form" (Gardiner 1954,38). This explication, formulated by Alan Gardiner, finally concludes that "The purest of proper names are those of which the sounds strike us as *wholly arbitrary, yet perfectly distinctive*, and about which we should feel, if ignorant of their bearers, no trace of meaning or significance", exemplifying this by *Vercingetorix*, and *Popocatepetl* (ibid,40).

This view may certainly have its merits, but postulates such as this, advocated in The Theory of Proper Names, and other similar expeditions into the ultimate essence of the proper name have no bearing to the present study. For our purpose, the earlier condensed, but accurate designation of "a word or group of words singling out an individual entity" (ibid,22) is sufficiently definitive.

III.3. GENERAL FEATURES OF PROPER NAMES

Concerning the proper name constituents in the English idioms studied, there is, despite some degree of transfer between the two main groups, a clear-cut division between personal names on one hand, and place names on the other. In addition

to a further division into single and compound names, relevant for both divisions, personal names can be classified into three categories: first, the *baptismal* or *Christian name*, or the *forename* (known as the **first name** or *given name* in the United States and Canada); second, the *surname* or *family name* (known as the **last name** in the U.S. and Canada); and finally, the above two names combined, the *personal name*, or more specifically - containing all the given names, if more than one - the *full name*, or **identity name**. As a safeguard against any potential confusion, the last term was devised to refer to 'full name' in this study. For reasons of clarity, the shortest and clearest designations (here in bold text) were chosen to represent each category.

A brief definition of the two main categories of personal names is implied in the above: "A given name is one that is bestowed on a child at birth, as opposed to an inherited surname" (Hanks & Hodges 1990,vii). In addition, a few introductory words into the history of both name types appear here appropriate. In contrast with personal names, surprisingly little is known of history of giving names to places.

Conventional given names constitute a relatively small set of items compared with surnames. The major European languages contain an inventory of few hundred male names and even fewer female names. Overall, more than a half of the common European forenames derive from Christian tradition.

This stock is supplemented by the adoption of ordinary words, surnames, and place names as given names (Hanks & Hodges 1990, viii-ix).

Formerly, when many people received at baptism the same given name, they were differentiated by surnames, previously of the type *John Redhead*, *John Hunter*, *John Scott*, which surnames then became fixed, and often hereditary in the respective families.

The earliest dates when the social institution of giving personal names - or place names - had become established remains in the twilight of social history. According to scholars, European surnames are "remarkably homogenous", perhaps due to the fact that European communities in the main share similar social histories. *Onomastical* studies - onomastics being the study of names - suggest that the origin of surnames in Europe is associable with the emergence of bureaucracy: as societies grew more complex, such matters as collection of taxes were delegated to special functionaries, and it became therefore imperative to have also a more complex system of *nomenclature* (system of names) to distinguish one individual from another.

Hence, in many parts of Europe hereditary surnames began to become fixed from the twelfth century onwards, usually on a *patronymic* basis: the bearer of a particular name was distinguished from other bearers of that name by identification of his father, on occasion of each respective

father back to the third, fourth, or further generations. In addition, the bearer of a given name was sometimes distinguished from others by reference to a locality, i.e. the place in which he or she lived, or from which they originated. Hence, *both patronymics and local names have been major sources of surnames* (Hanks & Hodges 1988,v).

III.4. SPECIFIC PROPERTIES OF IDIOMS

Difficulties arise from the complex terminology, to start with. The field of idiomatics involves a broad scope for a number of approaches: semantic, syntactic, grammatical, phraseological, lexical, phonological, morphological, literary, diachronic, of linguistic discourse, contextual, of various linguistic registers, etc. The wealth of related terminology is no wonder.

This situation is well expressed by Moon: "There is no generally agreed common vocabulary. Different terms are sometimes used to describe identical or very similar kinds of unit; at the same time, a single term may be used to denote very different phenomena" (Moon 1998,2). Terms, therefore, are in use that express very little on the surface:

'phraseological unit, phraseme, phrasal lexeme, lemma, token, lexical cluster, collocation, formula, etc. Beyond the concept and definition of the central issue', the idiom, the variant terms will not be looked at in detail in the present

study. The confusion existing in the definitional and descriptive aspect of idiom is further augmented by equally disquieting observations by some experts in linguistics:

"There is no clear boundary between an idiom and a collocation, or between a collocation and a freely generated phrase - only a continuum with greater density at one end and greater diffusion at the other" (Bolinger 1977,168, cited in Moon 1998,6).

In considering whether a string is what she calls a fixed expression (including idioms), Moon has established three criteria: institutionalization, lexicogrammatical fixedness, and non-compositionality.

Institutionalization is the process by which a string or formulation becomes recognized and accepted as a lexical item of the language (Bauer 1983,48). This he sees to be a "necessary but not a sufficient condition" for a string to be an idiom. Lexicogrammatical fixedness, or formal rigidity, refers to some sort of lexicogrammatical deficiency, exemplified by *call the shots*, *kith and kin*, and *shoot the breeze*.

Yet institutionalization and fixedness do not suffice by themselves. A semantic criterion, that of non-compositionality, emphasizes that the meaning which arises from word-by-word interpretation of the string does not yield the accepted, i.e. institutionalized, meaning of the string. Also a string may be decodable compositionally, but the unit

has a special discursual function, such as the function often carried by proverbs, similes and sayings. For Moon, non-compositionality is the basic criterion for identifying idioms, and she wishes this formulation to allow "the component lexical items to have special meanings within their context" (Moon 1998:8).

In addition, Moon picks up three further criteria: orthography - that idioms *should* consist of, or be written as, two or more words (admitting that "*not all studies are using it as a criterion*") [italics by the present author]; syntactic integrity - that idioms form syntactic or grammatical units in their own right, whether adjuncts, complements, noun phrases, sentence adverbials, verb phrases (with or without complementation), utterances or whole clauses; and, finally, phonology - that intonation will distinguish between compositional and non-compositional interpretations, referring, for instance, to Makkai (1972,29).

Finally all the previously stated factors are variables. Institutionalization, fixedness and non-compositionality, whilst distinguishing between idioms and non-idioms, are not equally represented in each idiom. There are degrees in each: from the extremely institutionalized *of course* to a less so *cannot cut the mustard*; from the extremely fixed *kith and kin* to the more flexible *take stick from - get a lot stick from - give someone stick*; from the completely non-compositional

(opaque) *bite the bullet* to the almost compositional (transparent) *enough is enough*.

An interesting contrast to this view advocated by Moon is that represented by Makkai (1972,38) of a dichotomic distinction between idioms and non-idioms, permitting no gradations. These qualitatively different types are called by Makkai **idioms of encoding** and **idioms of decoding** (1972,56f). The former are 'phraseological peculiarities' involving collocational preferences and restrictions, exemplified by *at* in *he drove at 70 m.p.h.* The latter are what he prefers to call 'misleading lexical clusters' such as *fly off the handle*.

III.5. QUALIFICATION PROBLEMS

Moon elaborates the defining criteria with three specific properties inherent in each idiom, combined called their '*idiomaticity*': 'institutionalization' (synonymous to some with 'lexicalization'); 'lexicogrammatical fixedness' (also termed 'frozenness'); and 'non-compositionality' (unmotivatedness, or unanalyzability or opacity).

Typical of institutionalization (lexicalization) is that potential ambiguity is irrelevant, while only some, potentially only one, from among all the possible interpretations are meant (Bauer 1983,4). No qualities of a lexical string make one interpretation excel the others as

such, it is only its familiarity to the person in question that he or she associates it with a certain meaning.

Or as Bauer says: "There is nothing in the form *telephone box* to prevent it from meaning a box shaped like a telephone, or a box which is located at a telephone, and so on; it is only because it is known to be synonymous with telephone kiosk" (1983,48). In Meys's (1975) terms: *telephone box* has been transferred from being **type familiar** to being **item familiar**: it is not just the construction, which is recognized, but the particular lexeme (cited in Bauer 1983,48). In other words, the string has been institutionalized. As stated, to some scholars this process is synonymous with that of lexicalization. Others, for example Quirk et al. (1985,152) and Lipka (1990,95), make a distinction between the two.

To Lipka, in the process of lexicalization "a complex lexeme once coined tends to become a single complete lexical unit, a simple lexeme", while in the question of institutionalization, both he and Quirk et al. agree with the above view by Bauer in equating it with "integration of a lexical item, with a particular form and meaning, into the existing stock of words as a generally acceptable and current lexeme" (Lipka 1990,95-6). In other words, a complex lexeme is institutionalized when the original nonce-formation is accepted by other speakers as a known lexical item. In short, lexicalization is the last stage in the process of a

metaphorical term losing its compositionality (motivation), and, as a result, turning into an idiom.

Lexicogrammatical fixedness, formal rigidity, refers to fixed expressions where only certain form or order of the constituents is possible. To describe the frozenness of the typical idiom, the compilers of *LongId* present (p.viii) three crucial operations that distinguish idiomatic phrases from normal ones, which they call literal phrases.

First, it is often impossible to substitute elements of the former with a semantically related word; for instance "the man gave up the *apparition*" has lost the idiomatic reading of somebody dying implied by "the man gave up the ghost", and the same is true for the variant "the man *released* the ghost". Secondly, in a literal phrase a noun may be substituted with a pronoun, but this is usually impossible in an idiom without the loss of the original, idiomatic meaning. With such a substitution, for instance "he spilt the beans about my new job" becomes "he spilt them about my new job", losing the idiomatic reading of 'letting out a secret'. Thirdly, passivization, which is normally operable (without a semantic loss) with transitive verbs, renders unnatural readings for idiomatic phrases. This produces sentences like "at three o'clock the ghost was given up by the man". In addition, some other grammatical operations normally viable with literal phrases may become impossible, as instanced by the pluralization in "the men gave up the ghosts".

As a rule, idiomatic phrases show great variety in terms of fixedness, whether lexical or grammatical, and the same is true of the whole phenomenon, i.e. the quality of a phrase of being idiomatic, or its *idiomaticity*. In other words, idiomaticity is a quality of degree or scale. In addition to Bolinger (1977,168 as cited in Moon 1998,6), this view is shared by some other scholars, for instance Fernando and Flavell: "... idiomaticity is a phenomenon too complex to be defined in terms of a single property. Idiomaticity is best defined by multiple criteria, each criterion representing a single property" (1981,19 as cited in Moon 1998,6).

Like fixedness, also idiomaticity is a matter of degree. In Moon's terms an idiomatic string may vary from the 'archetypal' form of *semantic* non-compositionality to *pragmatic*, i.e. "the string is decodable compositionally, but the unit has a special discorsal function" (1998,8), as instanced by proverbs, similes, and sayings. To describe the cases of incomplete non-compositionality, the term "semi-compositional" is used by Moon to describe some semi-idiomatic formulations adopted by primates as reported by Aitchison (1992,40ff. as cited in Moon 1998,6), such as *banana which is green* 'cucumber', *eye hat* 'mask', and *white tiger* 'zebra'. These semi-compositional formulations "...clearly show principles of analogy and motivation underlying attempts to overcome a restricted vocabulary" (1998,6).

Similar intermediate status is shown by some common idiomatic phrases like *spill the beans* or *rock the boat*, which are partly compositional both structurally and metaphorically in that "we can understand and appreciate the pertinence of the image" (1998,8). In other words, 'semi-idioms' have one component or more making them partly motivated, or transparent. It is often stated that they have, accordingly, at least two readings, one or more literal and the idiomatic one, and are, as a result, used far more in their idiomatic than the literal sense (cf. *LongId*, p.viii). Due to this double interpretation, some scholars have suggested that even native speakers may be unaware of this ambiguity of metaphorical idioms, or, alternatively, recognize them only as idioms. This view, shared among others by Cowie, Mackin & McCaig (*OxfId*, p.xiii), is contestable; Van Lancker and Carter (1981) and Van Lancker et al. (1981), among others, show evidence from experiment-based results suggesting that native speakers are fully aware of these alternative interpretations and are even capable of non-verbal communication as to what interpretation of the two is involved in each speech situation (in Moon 1998,9).

Another point worth noting and equally inherent in a typical idiom (as ambiguity) is their special tendency to present themselves in certain more or less fixed 'clots' or solidifications which tend to resist external changes. In this quality they gain some of the specific characteristics

of a word (lexeme). In Cruse's (1986, 38) words: "Although idioms consist of more than one word they display to some extent the sort of internal cohesion that we expect of single words". As stated earlier, they resist grammatical modifications, such as interruption, insertion, and substitution or re-ordering of constituents.

To catch something of this idiom-specific feature of internal cohesion and external immunity, above compared with the clotting characteristic of blood, repeated attempts were made to arrive at a formula, sufficiently free and general to allow the enormous variety of such solidification, and sufficiently concise to allow a short description. Various structural classifications delineated above, though clear-cut and illustrating the rich diversity of the English idiom, are therefore substituted by a fresh approach of description, presented in detail in Section V.3. One of the justifications of such a venture is the author's firm belief that such a novel view will allow some other scholars to make further use of it and be thus capable of describing this aspect of the idiom better than has been the case up to the present.

III.6. CLASSIFICATION OF IDIOMS

Since the structural and semantic variety in English idioms is enormous, a number of distinct classifications have been presented, for instance on the basis of lexical, syntactic,

or semantic features, and also on varying selectional ones, which combinedly might be called pragmatic. Even if there are a number of criteria viable in distinguishing one idiom from another, no universally or uniformly accepted classification exists that would adequately classify each English idiom into its pertinent category. The types adopted for this classification are noun phrase (NP), preposition phrase (PP), adjective phrase (AP), adverb phrase (AvP), verb phrase (VP), and sentence (S); the abbreviated forms are used in listings, tabulations and charts to be studied in the final analysis. Incidentally, the formal names for idiom classes in some compilations (OxfId or LongId) appear uneven, if not illogical in the use of *Noun Phrases*, and not *Nominal Phrases*, abreast of *Adjectival Phrases*, *Adverbial Phrases*, and *Prepositional Phrases*.

Due to the tremendous variety of English idioms - also of those inclusive of a proper name - and also on practical grounds, this study has discarded the 'typical' classification, devised on mainly structural grounds, as presented, for example, by Cowie, Mackin and McCaig (1983,xi). The above standard phrase patterns, however, have proven convenient also for this study, and have, therefore, been utilized.

In OxfId (1983,xi) four phrase patterns are formed to represent phrase idioms:

Noun phrases as shown by: **a crashing bore**

Adjective phrases: **free with one's money**

Preposition phrases: **in the nick of time**

Adverb phrases: **as often as not**

As for verbs, or clause idioms as they call the class,
the following five clause patterns are devised:

Verb+complement: **go berserk**

Verb+direct object: **ease sb's conscience**

Verb+direct object+complement: **paint the town red**

Verb+indirect object+direct object: **do sb credit**

Verb+direct object+adjunct: **take sth amiss**

IV. THE DATA

IV.1. ON THE GENERAL FAMILIARITY OF THE BACKGROUND OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS

Uncle Sam; doubting Thomas; Uncle Tom; Alice in Wonderland; as pleased as Punch; as poor as Job's turkey; Adam's ale; not to know one from Adam; to raise Cain; to out-Herod Herod; Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde; Parkinson's law; Al at Lloyd's; to put on the ritz; John Bull; John Hancock; the wise men of Gotham; to carry coals to Newcastle; to grin like a Cheshire cat.

This is a modest share of the idioms in the Top Hundred whose origin was known to the writer of this study before launching the project. This figure (averaging out 19 per cent) is in itself unflattering, since the signification of quite a few will be self-explanatory: the biblical allusions behind Adam, Job, Cain, Herod, and Thomas are obvious to every Tom, Dick and Harry.

On the other hand, the roles in British history of such royalty as King Charles and Queen Anne in their respective idioms must be equally evident to the native speaker of British English, which they were not to the present writer. To the former, a great majority of the remaining 80 per cent among the most popular English proper name idioms (the Top Hundred) are likely to be child's play in terms of etymology, so genuinely connected to British or American social and political history they appear. One needs merely to think of

phrases such as *Aunt Sally; teddy boy; Colonel Blimp; the real McCoy; Belisha beacon; Buggins's turn; Lynch law; Tommy Atkins; shipshape and Bristol fashion; according to Cocker,* and expressions such as *'And Bob's your uncle'; to be in Burke; gone for a burton; to grin like a Cheshire cat.* In order to check the percentage of such prior knowledge against wider material, the original 500 items were run through, and rather similar findings resulted: 93 of them were known to this author, averaging out to 18.6 per cent.

The knowledgeability of the average student will vary a great deal, as is obvious from his or her prior exposure to the English language, whether in the form of personal residence in the Anglo-Saxon world or regular social connections with native speakers. On the average, however, a rough estimate of 20 per cent might stand for an average rate of familiarity of the typical student with the English proper name idiomacy. As a result, he or she could easily multiply their knowledge of such idioms simply by means of a careful examination of a typical good-quality compilation exemplified by OxfId. In addition, an increase of this order would be a "good value per time invested", since the frequency of the idiomatic phrase in both spoken and written language is high as compared with its share in the lexicon.

Another aspect relevant to language learning in general was the finding that among the concise selection termed 'Top Hundred', and, more particularly among the original 500

idioms, there still remained a great many items whose actual proper name origins appeared unknown to the educated native speaker as well; this, namely, was tested by five middle-aged persons with an academic degree, four native to Britain and one to the United States, who all failed to recognize quite a surprising number of idiom meanings not to speak of their origins. In the following results the first figure represents the actual research data, 'The Top Hundred', and the latter the original gathered material, 'The Five-Hundred'. The overall figures averaging the whole group were as follows: 53.2 per cent and 28.9 per cent were known of the meanings, and 18.2 per cent and 13.2 per cent of the origins. After eliminating the best and the poorest scores among the five, the respective results yield 57.7 per cent and 29.7 per cent for meanings, and 14.7 per cent and 11.2 per cent for origins.

With progressive study, this observation was no longer so surprising as at the outset of this project: so widely varied are also the accounts, where given, of their etymology in particular; it is for these very reasons that the most modest in this respect among the sources were discarded from the study.

Another explanation to the surprisingly scanty number of recognized items might be due to prolonged lack of exposure to the informants' native language. And, of course, due to

the possibility that in the course of decades a number of the collected idioms may have turned obsolescent, even obsolete.

IV.2. GROUNDS FOR CHOOSING THE DATA

The selectional grounds for choosing the material for this study are as follows:

The aim was to find and gather together relevant material, i.e. English idioms including a proper name constituent. These idioms were to be found in major idiom compilations available to the student at any Finnish university with an English department. The material was to be general and modern: wide in scope and contemporary in use.

Hence, at the outset, all idioms containing ancient classical (Greco-Roman) and biblical proper names were discarded. Similarly all specific contexts, such as religious, political, economic, artistic, scientific, military etc., were excluded, adopting, however, representatives of any such special field in as much as these were found to be a part of the common, modern everyday register used by 'any Tom, Dick and Harry'.

The purpose of the study was to collect only proper name idioms that were current coin to the native speakers of English at the time of the investigation, i.e. the latter half of the 1980s. There was no plethora of idiom dictionaries available in Finland from among those published

within this time frame; accordingly, the latest among the finally selected compilations went back to the 1970s and 1960s, two even to 1950s. To ensure an adequate number of items, however, concessions like this were necessary (the last-mentioned two sources containing relevant material in abundance).

Out of necessity, this approach may have somewhat limited the currency of idiomatic material gathered from the earliest among these compilations. Attempts were made, however, to effectively minimize these restrictions by checking the validity, in terms of contemporaneity, of items eligible for this study against the items provided by more recent compilations, also checking, as a last resort, this aspect against the data provided by the OED. All idioms that were in such checking acknowledged as obsolete or even obsolescent, were discarded. These measures of elimination, however, could never be entirely exclusive, since a number of idiomatic phrases were found not to be covered by the OED.

As for the emphasis on British idiom material, no more American, Irish, let alone Australian or other relevant, compilations were available at the department library of Helsinki University at the time of reviewing the sources than those mentioned in the bibliography. It will be apparent to anyone scrutinizing the list that the majority of American works were ones not carrying idiomacy as their principal issue. This fact accounts for the scanty American

representation; furthermore, the idioms related to Ireland and Australia had to be studied in British or American sources, since no other compilations were available.

Another story completely is the problematic issue concerning the Bible. Had this work been completely discarded, quite a few proper name phrases (ten in Top Hundred), widely used and often potent, would have gone lost, which would have been detrimental for the assessment of the rich variety and chronological depth of the current English proper name idiomacy. Biblical, let us be more specific here, does not in the frame of this study refer merely to *an idiomatic saying occurring as such in the Bible*, but also to those that have been formulated or reformulated around certain biblical characters or events, as evidenced by such phrases as 'Adam's ale'; 'Holy Moses'; and 'There is no leaping from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom'. Among the 500 original proper name idioms there are direct biblical or religious elements in 37 strings, whose number the inclusion of indirect or euphemistic phrases increases to 47 in all, representing a share of ten per cent in the data. These items are enlarged on in Section VIII.6.

IV.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DATA

ON THE FORMATION OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS

In addition to the widely varied derivations in some of the source books (see Sections VII.1 and VII.3.), a great variety of linguistic means is used for their formation, aptly reflecting the complex human thought with its conventional and also unpredictable ways of encapsulating ideas. As a general observation, it appears that the typical way of bringing about a catchy phrase around a proper name is 'accidental' or '*non-rational*', not so much irrational: in the quick of a moment things simply link together into a mental image fresh enough to catch people's attention and thus gain a wider currency. There are, of course, a fair number of 'conventional' idioms created by sound and sane reasoning; and yet these formations are perhaps not the most impressible and catchy, qualities which would assure them a longer life-span than that of the more tepid idiom.

This aspect, the longevity of the typical idiom - whether coupled with a proper name or without it - would be an aspect worthy of careful investigation in its own right; being beyond the scope of this study, this issue will have to be left in store for another survey. The above trend is but a general tendency grounded on the workings of the human mind; yet it would be most satisfying to see it analyzed in another linguistic study on the English idioms.

A variety of means can be distinguished as coupling or freezing certain 'eligible' elements (even if, strictly taken, there are no fool-proof criteria for the formation of

idioms, since a varying degree of 'frozenness' or grammatical fixedness is one of their chief properties) into what is called an idiom can be distinguished. The simplest, obviously, is direct transfer: an adoption of a proper name to describe the phenomenon it became at a given stage so apt a representation of as to earn to be fixed into an inseparable whole (*Darby and Joan*), at some stage perhaps abbreviating it for the sake of convenience (*a ted[dy boy/girl]*), condensing it (*every man jack [of them]*), or corrupting it - sometimes beyond recognition - (*Davy Jones's locker*).

Such corruption may be due to historical reasons: those connected to an idiom's 'chequered career', perhaps in the shape of what could be called 'vernacularization', or a natural tendency among native speakers of a language to mould a foreign expression into a form better conforming to the pattern of established pronunciation and spelling: *all my eye and Betty Martin*, and *Davy Jones's locker* appear likely of such a birth (their alleged models read 'o mihi, beate Martine', and 'Duffy' (a West Indian ghost) or 'Jonah' (in the Bible)). In addition to some natural reasons helping to fix the elements together (alliteration, internal rhyme, rhythm, and similar factors), rhyme, possibly sharpened with reduplication, has turned out to be among the most popular devices of forming an idiomatic string (*Box and Cox, it's even(s) Stephen(s), namby pamby*), even in fantasy formations,

onomatopoetic expressions or downright nonsensical phrases (*Tweedledum and Tweedledee; mumbo jumbo*).

An unexpectedly high number of items could claim candidacy for several classes, depending on the viewpoint, another feature reflecting the rich diversity of the English idiom. (This classification will be presented in the following chapter, 'An outline of the formation of proper name idioms'.) The last two of the above phrases, for instance, could both be placed under alternative classifications, for instance those of 'onomatopoeticals', 'reduplicatives', and 'fantasticals'.

Another class of idiom formation totally new to this writer was found among what could be termed as 'hybrids' or 'mixed bag' (*Don't Now Norah me!*) where the proper name element has been connected to a 'non-standard' complement (in contrast with such normal derivatives as *grangerize, spoonerism, Lucy Stoner*).

In addition, there are formations which can be justly derived from more than one equally credible sources, making their categorization vacillating: *larrikin* can be seen as either deriving from Larry + (nonstandard suffix) kin, or representative of a present participle of the verb to lark, or even a corruption of 'Larry's kin'.

An idiom may also travel through 'intersecting paths', as this phenomenon perhaps could be characterized, i.e. through parallel developments which subsequently merge into

one; sayings like *Queer Street* (possibly from query + Carey Street); *the real McCoy* (possibly the real Mackay + the noted boxer under the name of McCoy). Both these examples may have gone separate or parallel ways to fix into the one that has been the predominant in a given surrounding. Colloquial or even slangy forebears may lie behind some idioms (*Civvy Street, bristols, not on your Nellie*).

As with a great many normal idioms, humour and pun are part and parcel in those with a proper name constituent as well; one cannot help smiling or even laughing at *Annie Oakley, Alibi Ike, Caudle lecture, bowler-hatted bull, Mae West, Murrumbridgee whaler, or Dame Partington with her mop*.

As stated above, there are a number of formations which can be derived through several potential ways, making their categorization problematic: *Mumbo jumbo* may have originated simply via reduplication from the initial 'mumbo', or a native African spirit, or otherwise fall into class of rigmaroles or nonsensical collocations.

Any attempt to a logical systematization of proper name idioms may be also complicated by ellipsis, the gradual discardment of the final element, usually an appellative representing business, institution, commodity etc. which is intrinsically obvious to the native speaker and also to any other person knowledgeable of the connection between the two. Ellipsis is 'visible' in *Al at Lloyd's* (Register), *gone for a burton* (ale), *Donnybrook* (fair), and *to give someone the old*

Harvey Smith (gesture). The more unusual final elements lost through ellipsis are instanced by a *Joe Miller* (joke), a *Heath-Robinson* (contraption), *to be in Burke/Debrett* ('s calendar), *to put on the ritz* (airs). On occasion, an idiom may illustrate what might be called 'double ellipsis', due to recurring elision: *A1* (at Lloyd's (Register)).

Conversely, there may be found items with 'additional' elements, or those where the omission of such an extra trimming would not risk 'transparency' or clarity of meaning, or, on occasion, would result in no loss of effect or illustrative power. Interestingly, such fittings frequently prove to be 'optional extras': *to go to Davy Jones's* (locker; this character itself being a (corrupted) designation for a sea spirit delighting in drowned people), *to give a person the (old) Harvey Smith* (gesture; who mocked one of the judges at a sports show by making an obscene motion).

This tendency to carry along the proper name redundant or ornamental elements is most frequent in conjunction with Last Names or Identity Names: *the (great) Panjandrum*, *a (gay) Lothario*, *a (regular) Scrooge*, *(sweet) Fanny Adams*, *the (real) Simon Pure*; a process perhaps witnessing the gradual 'erosion' of disposable elements in cases where the personage has at some stage become established in people's minds so inseparably with its qualifying epithet as to suffer no loss of meaning from the loss of this colouring element (enjoying continued life as a mental image).

This piecemeal process is neatly illustrated by the sad case of Miss *Fanny Adams*, a phrase originating in the name of a murdered young girl, from whence it became an euphemism for tinned meat popularized by the British Navy, which in turn gradually grew to mean a thing of no value. Along this process of meaning transfer, also 'her formal appearance' underwent several changes (parentheses here signalling optionality): from *sweet Fanny Adams* into *(sweet) Fanny Adams*, further into *sweet F.A.*, and *(sweet) F.A.* into mere *F.A.*, which itself finally took the (slangy) form of *effay*.

By way of comparison, there are, of course, a great many First Names with a similar, oftenmost adjectival, modifier; yet this qualifier is seldom optional, excepting a few cases with an intensifying companion: she is a *(regular) Moll*, or he is a *(proper) Charlie*. As a rule, an intensifier when attached to a First Name is not optional but fixed: a *smart aleck*, a *clever dick*, a *nice nellie*. Similarly in the case of Last Names, whenever the epithet conveys some critical additional meaning to the proper name headword, helping to identify and distinguish it from eponymous cousins, it tends to become fixed: *an admirable Crichton*, *the real McCoy*, *a noseyparker*. There are, however, instances of the process of simplification or reduction going on in Last Names, but then they appear to be evidential of the phrase's lexicalization: a *blimp* deriving from *Colonel Blimp*.

Among the most elusive to categorize are cases where also the derivation from a proper name is but conjectural and equally open to some other route. These could be grouped under the heading 'candidates' for proper name idioms, exemplified by such items as *Bobby-soxers*, most probably deriving from 'bobbed socks' instead of any one called Bobby, or *batty*, an adjectival expression originating, again most likely, in the phrase '*to have bats in the belfry*', and not from an eponymous lawyer in Kingston, Jamaica, noted enough for his eccentricity to justify the term. In many such cases there frequently exists evidence in one direction or another, yet we lack substantiation or corroborative proof; in other words, the etymologically oriented scholar moves on less firm ground, has to explore it, and is, on occasion, even forced to blaze a trail of one's own.

Another rather troublesome group to classify is that of those obvious (as such) proper name idioms whose proper name element may derive from several alternative name types, for instance the name of a person or place - which itself is nothing of the extraordinary; many place names have their origins in a person, and vice versa. The Lynch in *Lynch law*, the Dulcarnon of *to be at Dulcarnon*, the Pandon in *as old as Pandon gates* are some instances of this possibility.

On occasion it is also problematic to decide between two alternative classifications when a place name may have its origin in person, or contrariwise: the Paul in *Paul's man*,

where it stands for the St Paul's cathedral in London, the name of which derives from the saint. Equally, is the Shanter of *Tam-o'-Shanter* a designation of place or person? Or, are the configurations in fantasy formations to be classified under First Names or Last Names, or even Identity Names - let us remember that oftenmost they appear as a lump, which may be separated into parts (*the great Panjandrum, mumbo jumbo, Tweedledum and Tweedledee*). A simple rule of thumb has been applied: those appearing as one string are classified under Last Names, those in two parts as Identity Names.

Lastly, a group in its own right is constituted by appellatives substituting, by force of their signification, a proper name and hence oftenmost also capitalized. Often enough these are even more expressive or descriptive than proper names proper, justifying their adoption as such: *Miss/Mr Right, Mrs Mop, Liberty Hall, Shank's mare/pony, Walker's bus, Freeman's Quay*.

As became apparent during the first reading several thousands of pages of potential source compilations at the initial stage, the typological, structural and derivational variety of the English proper name idiom is immense. In the following some of the findings are listed in a somewhat 'unorthodox' grouping of the various idiom types. It must be unorthodox in the sense that it is not based strictly on any single classification factor, since the formal, syntagmatic, derivational, and semantic origins as well as the chains of

etymological developments leading to the final frozen idiomatic utterance have proven to be extremely versatile.

Below are listed the main denominations of proper name idioms with a short heading to describe the essentials.

AN OUTLINE OF THE FORMATION OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS

- basic forms (idioms adopted as such from proper names):
Darby and Joan; Gotham college; in the land of Nod; to John Audley something
- forms derived with an affix (whether prefix or suffix):
to out-Herod Herod
- forms built on proper names furnished with some modifying element (title, adjective, noun, pronoun, numeral or various combinations of these): *Uncle Sam; merry Andrew; Champagne Charlie; any Tom, Dick and Harry; three tailors of Tooley Street*
- abbreviated forms: *(sweet) F.A.* [Fanny Adams]
- elliptical forms: *bristols* [<Bristol cities]; *Al at Lloyd's* (Register); *gone for a burton* (ale); *to pull a brodie* (jump)
- various other contracted forms: *jack-a-dreams; Tom o'Bedlam; 'Be a good boy or Boney will catch you'*
- forms alternating between capital initials or lower case initials; a feature which would also suggest the stage where a 'proper name proper' is gradually turning into a

- common noun: a development which is obvious from items such as *Jack/jack; smart Aleck/aleck; merry Andrew/andrew; silly Billy/billy; like Billyo/billyo, Namby-Pamby/namby-pamby*; some of which have become institutionalized, as witnessed by: *clever dick; every man jack; jack-in-the-box; cheap-jack; jackass; teddy bear; cissy/sissy; tomboy*
- alternative spelling forms: *proper Charley/Charlie; nice Nelly/Nellie; jerrycan/jerrican; cissy/sissy; like billio/billyo/billy-oh; (old) Tom Cobleigh/Cobley and all*; among such alternative forms are usually presented in this study, the most frequent or dominant form (as evident in the sources or the OED) is listed first
 - corruptions (corrupted forms): *to talk bunkum*; some of such corruptive processes have rendered any obvious link between the final product and the original beyond recognition: *'maudlin'; 'tawdry'; 'zany'*
 - metaphors: *Pollyanna; Robin Hood; Florence Nightingale*
 - euphemisms: *For Pete's sake!; For the love of Mike!; Old Harry; Go to Halifax!*
 - fantasy formations: *Panjandrum; Pooh Bah; mumbo jumbo*
 - appellatives 'properized' (used as proper names): *Miss Right; Miss Lonelyhearts; Liberty Hall; Freeman's Quay; Shank's mare; Walker's bus*

- person proper names derived from other class of proper names, such as weekdays: *man/girl Friday*
- neologisms: *Carruthers of the Foreign Office; Alibi Ike*
- backformations: *hoodlum*
- conversions: *Don't 'Now Norah' me!*
- onomatopoeitic phrases: *larrikin; Tweedledum & Tweedledee*
- reduplications: *mumbo jumbo; hill-billy; namby-pamby*
- cross-gender formations: *Nancy boy*
- cross-class compounds combining proper and common nouns: *tomboy; jerrycan; to put up one's dukes; to mollycoddle; to gerrymander*
- invented proper names suggesting desired effect via pronunciation: *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* [jackal and hide]; *Panjandrum* [panz and drum]
- sentences formed from units which themselves have been used independently but are now conveying new ideas: *'There's no leaping from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom.'*
- collocations of verbs and 'properized' appellatives: *to ride Shank's mare; to go by Walker's bus; to drink at Freeman's Quay*
- imitations of foreign rhymes, formulas, litanies and the like: *all my eye and Betty Martin*

- reworkings from litanies, rituals etc.: *'From Hull, Hell and Halifax, dear Lord, deliver us'*
- dialectal malformations: *'I's Yorkshire, too'*.
- slang phrases (often euphemistic and elliptic):
bristols; Not on your Nellie!; to take the mickey out of someone
- first names, last names and identity names formed from 'properized' appellatives: *Sparks, Brother Chip; Mrs Candour; Shotten Herring*
- identity name hybrids (collocations of true proper names and properized appellatives: *Jack Frost; Jack Straw; Jim Crow; Tom Long; Tom Thumb*
- place name hybrids (as above): *Dragsville; Birchin Lane; Carey Street; Gutter Lane; Needham; Weeping Cross*
- names using various uncommon elements for its class:
George-a-Green; Dragsville; Don't Now Norah me!
- proper names once 'appellativized' and then 're-properized': *Marrybone coach < [marrybun] c. < Marylebone c.*
- idioms deriving from songs, rhymes, games, folktales, legends and the like: *Mr Reilly; Tom Cobleig; Aunt Sally; Gotham College; Goodman's Croft*
- ad-hoc or nonce formations: *Don't 'Now Norah' me!; gerrymander; maverick; Alibi Ike*

V. METHODS OF DICTIONARY ANALYSIS

The source material is grouped into analyzable data by creating a structural framework for its final analysis. The terminology used for the creation of this framework is dealt with in the following.

V.1. THE STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

The material is arranged into alphabetical entries, the ordering being based on the initial of the proper name component. Where the idiom contains several proper names, it is based on the first item in such multi-name idioms:

*'every/any **Tom**, Dick or Harry'; '**John Doe** and Richard Roe';*

*'to rob **Peter** to pay Paul; '**Birmingham** by way of Beachy*

Head'. By the same token, in arranging the name types

*inherently composed of several elements (Last Names, Identity Names, occasionally also Place Names), the ordering is based on the initial of the first constituent forming the **name**:*

*Queen **Anne's** dead, on one's **Jack** Jones, to be in **Civvy** Street.*

As appears from the above examples, there is no distinction in classification or ordering between an idiom with a single proper name and another with names constituting - to use the terminology relevant for this thesis - 'doublets' or even 'triplets': *Jack and Jill; Tom and Jerry; every Tom,*

Dick or Harry; John Doe and Richard Roe; Brown, Jones and Robinson; Dr Quiet, Dr Diet and Dr Merryman; all Lombard Street to a China orange; from Hull, Hell and Halifax Good Lord deliver us; to box and cox; to rob Peter to pay Paul.

[The two further principles governing the ordering in the initial data of 500 idioms have been discarded save the tabulation of this original material, now constituting Appendix 3. For those interested in this data, the following structural guidelines will be serviceable.

First, whenever the idiom is premodified (i.e. in First Names, and, occasionally, in Last Names), its ordering is affected by the premodifier type as follows: first come those premodified by a title, next those by a noun/pronoun, and last those by an adjective. Second, whenever there are present both uninflected and inflected forms of names in idioms (virtually restricted to Person Names), these are arranged into respective groups, where the uninflected forms - since interpreted as being the basic form - always precede the inflected ones. Thus *Uncle Sam* precedes both *Alibi Ike* and *smart Aleck*, while *Tommy shop* precedes *Adam's ale*, and *Lynch law* goes before *Buggins's turn*, and *Philadelphia lawyer* before *Duke of Exeter's daughter*.]

The classes in which the proper names appear are ordered as follows: First Names (FNs), Last Names (LNs), Identity Names (INs) and Place Names (PlaNs). These classes are further classifiable into the *two superordinate classes*:

Person Names (PeNs), and Place Names (PlaNs). Each of these name classes are further placed into various phrase groups on the grounds of their appearance, i.e. the phrase type in which they emerge, again in certain order: Noun Phrases (NPs), Adjective Phrases (APs), Adverb Phrases (AvPs), Preposition Phrases (PPs), Verb Phrases (VPs), and Sentences (Ss).

In addition to the actual sentences (*And Bob's your uncle*), also the three clauses (*when miss Right comes along, before you could say Jack Robinson, and when Dudman and Ramhead meet*) are included in Sentences, which they come closest by this typology.

Similarly, some exclamations and utterances which inherently imply the predicative 'be' which is, however, not represented in the surface structure (*Nice one, Cyril!, Not tonight, Josephine!, Elementary, my dear Watson!*), are included in VPs. These, however, appear among the original source material but not in the final selection studied, hence being present only in tabular form for purposes of comparison with the Top Hundred.

The above principles, guiding the classification of the source material of this study, determine also the ordering in which the material is treated throughout the investigation, i.e. in the presentation of the data, in any types of analysis, and in all tabular display.

V.2. TERMINOLOGY FOR THE CREATION OF STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

The currently employed terminology was finally decided upon for the purpose of clarity and unambiguity, especially in avoidance of confusion from closely resembling forms contracted from their initials. Thus, the adopted abbreviations are **FN** for *First Names*, **LN** for *Last Names*, **IN** for *Identity Names*, **PlaN** for *Place Names*, and **PeN** for *Person Names*.

Identity Name is an appellation replacing the more conventional term Full Name, which would, in an abbreviated form, too obviously confuse with the heading First Name. For a similar reason, the term Location Name was at first thought of as an apt replacement for Place Name, which, again in its abbreviated use, could easily be taken for Person Name, unless some other designation was found. Location Name (in its contracted form) was, however, to be mistaken for Last Name, and thus this alternative appellation was discarded for the fair and square Place Name. To guard against any misconceptions, the respective 'initialized' abbreviations are **PeN** for Person Names, and **PlaN** for Place Names.

In addition, these two headings are only used in contexts where the respective 'superordinate' groups are discussed in contrast, being there, for the sake of clarity, always presented in their unabbreviated forms.

For further description, FN refers to the name used in familiar terms as a personal form of address, distinguishing the addressee from other persons present or potentially inclusive in the frame of reference, LN referring to an individual's family, also distinguishing him or her from their namesakes (also by this distinctive reference through the family), and IN covers both, representing a person's identity as ordinarily expressed in our western world. By the same token, the term Person Name is a superordinate concept covering all the former units, and always used contrastively with the other main appellation, Place Name.

Finally, PlaN designates a name given to a geographic entity, whether country, province, or city; a river, street, building or institution, or any similar establishment distinguished from other similar locations by the proper name.

In any ambiguous or contradictory cases, in other words in cases where the item (idiomatic string containing a proper name) could have been located under two or even more Name Classes, the guiding principles of 'common sense' and maximal clarity of classification and investigation have been followed. Thus, for instance, '*A1 at Lloyd's*' has been placed under Last Names, since this establishment with its world-famous register is more closely connected to the personage in the background of the marine insurance company (even if not the founder or proprietor suggested by this idiom) and not

the locational reference, which might be more relevant to the phrase. Decisions in such borderline cases are often difficult, and, as a result, grouping resulting into a category or another is possible, often equally justifiable.

For this very reason, every effort has been made to ensure appropriate classification in cases where the proper name is potentially classifiable into the groups of First Names and Last Names, which, incidentally, is a rather surprising phenomenon (as evidenced by Eliot, James, or Henry); in other words, neither First nor Last Names are such a clear-cut designation as one would expect at the outset. That certain given names are current for both males and females is a well-known fact (Chris, Leslie, Billie). Each such case is crosschecked from several sources for the final class assignment.

V.3. THE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM DEvised FOR THIS STUDY

Certain modifications have been constructed to the basic noun phrase pattern, which has proven to be the core of a majority of English proper name idioms. The new pattern is a result of a five-fold modifiability of the 'nucleic' noun phrase. The process behind this novel distribution is as follows.

First, each proper name element in the idiom is schematized, instead of the traditional 'parsing patterns', in terms of modification, namely both prenominal and

postnominal by a superordinate instrument, which has been developed to be, on one hand, more analytical than a mere phrase pattern, and, on the other hand, yet more flexible; also showing better coverage and functionality over the traditional syntactic description.

Second, categorization has been extended to each phrase type where the proper name appears. Using this device, all proper name phrases have been grouped into five categories: a phrase without modification (0), with premodification (1), with postmodification (2), a phrase itself as a premodifier (3), and postmodifier (4). The four name classes, First Names (FNs), Last Names (LNs), Identity Names (INs) and Place-Names (PlaNs) have then been cross-tabulated with the above categories, with the purpose of gaining an overview on the special features of each main class.

A few words concerning the question of orthography appear appropriate. It namely proved impossible to establish reliably which form of the occurring spelling variants should be interpreted as the 'correct' or 'standard' one; consultation with the editorial notes in the OED was therefore made and the form listed in it as the first item under each entry was also accepted as the spelling norm for this study. The typically occurring variants are mentioned after this stock form.

As for the ordering of idioms, the system used in this thesis follows from the classification principles determined

at the outset. First, all material is divided into the four Name Classes. Next, under each class, items are listed under the six Phrase Types. Third, every separate idiom among a given Name Class listed under the relevant Phrase Type is further ordered according to its mode of modification, entailing now five categories. This system is covered in greater detail and exemplified in the following description of the coding system.

The coding used in tabulation and prefixed to each proper name idiom contains three digits, each of which has the following references. The first of the three digits stands for the main class: 1 for First Name, 2 for Last Name, 3 for Identity Name, and 4 for Place Name. The second digit represents the surroundings of the name, i.e. the phrase type of which the proper name is a constituent, 1 standing for Noun Phrases, 2 for Adjective Phrases, 3 for Adverb Phrases, and 4 Preposition Phrases, 5 for Verb Phrases, and 6 for Sentences. The last, third, digit signifies, as stated above, the 'configuration' of the phrase: 0 standing for the state of non-modification, i.e. the proper name constituent of the idiom stands qualified by neither pre- or postmodification nor by acting itself as either pre- or postmodifier. Respectively the figures 1 to 4 refer to the proper name standing as follows, 1 for the status of being premodified, 2 for that of being postmodified, 3 for functioning itself as a premodifier, and 4 for serving as a postmodifier.

By way of example: 1.1.0 represents First Name constituent appearing in an Noun Phrase idiom and being without any form of modification; an idiom such as *Darby and Joan*. Another, 1.2.3, is a First Name in an Adjective Phrase), the FN functioning itself as a premodifier, exemplified by *as poor as Job's turkey*. Yet another, 4.5.3 represents a Place Name) appearing in a Verb Phrase and acting as a premodifier, *to grin like a Cheshire cat*.

The above gradation was aimed at further enhancing the descriptive power of classification of FNs in NPs, which is by far the richest class. In other classes, excluding the respective cases under Last Names, this subdivision was discarded due to the scantiness of such variants, or since all items found in the data are uniformly of one type only (*the daughter of Eve*).

The present approach was decided upon, in distinction from the tabulation by Cowie, for example, for the following reasons. The present research project aims not at investigating into the structural or syntactic intricacies of the English proper name idiom. On the other hand, however, some level of structural description is clearly called for. In contrast with a number of traditional grammatical descriptions (in OxfId (1984), LongId (1975), and numerous others), a fresh view on the syntagmatic substrate of the English idiom with a proper name element resulted. Instead of elaborate grammatical analysis splitting the surface level

into minute syntactic units (qualifiers, quantifiers, determiners, identifiers etc.) a complementary method was aimed at: namely, to describe the idiomatic string in its natural 'clot-like formation', i.e. in its living surroundings. The overall, superordinate key concept to perform this role was found to be 'modification'; or rather, to show in what kind of syntagmatic combinations, clusters, these proper name idioms typically appear.

In addition to the descriptive power of this novel approach to typify the idiom string, it is also capable of revealing what kind of idiomatic strings are *not* typically productive. For instance, contrary to modification by adjectival element in First Names (*smart aleck*) or Last Names (*admirable Crichton*), Identity Names do not readily accept premodifying adjectives, and, invariably, in such few instances as they do, the modifying adjectival segment is optional: (*sweet*) *Fanny Adams*; *to give someone the (old) Harvey Smith* (parentheses indicating optionality). In other words, in examining the research material the following prediction avails itself: adjectival premodifiers appear frequently in NPs and VPs, but not in APs or PPs, and their adjectival modifier is then usually optional.

To sum up the results of the previous two special features of this novel approach, the following two predictions seem to present themselves concerning adjectival modifiers to Personal Names, or PeNs for short, referring to

all the three classes (FNs, LNs, and INs) collectively, as distinct from Place-Names (PlaNs). First, Identity Names show resistance to the adoption of adjectival premodifiers, and, in the few instances they accept one, it proves optional. Second, adjectival premodifiers appear frequently in Noun Phrases and Verb Phrases, but markedly less Adjective Phrases or Preposition Phrases. (For a more detailed presentation of these features see Section VIII.9. 'On the Structural Types Represented in the Data', and for potential reasons of non-representation in certain categories are briefly discussed in a subsequent chapter 'Matrix Anomalies'.)

It does not follow, however, that the whole paradigm of the English idiom with a proper name constituent is readily revealed or even predicted, but, given adequate material support, this matrix is capable of generating predictions over the general surroundings for a given class of proper name idioms, at least in terms of phrase type (NP, AP, AvP, PP, VP, and S), and of string type (mode of modification).

On the basis of evidence gained in this study, the proper name idioms constitute but a minute share among the whole register of English idiomacy - their proportional representation among the latter averages out to 1.15 per cent (calculated from the material gathered by Cowie & al. in the two-volume OxfId (1975/1983), then the most recent and representative idiom compilation). Or, in actual numbers: merely 80 proper name idioms in the corpus of 7000 idioms. By

this rate of occurrence, the original number of PN idioms initially gathered as research material (500 items) suggests a total number of 43 750 English idioms; a theoretical figure, of course, but this number also fits in neatly with the total of some 5000 pages investigated in the original sources at the outset of this study in search for material, averaging out some nine proper name idioms per page.

IV.4. CRITERIA FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE GENERAL INFORMATION VALUE OF THE TYPICAL IDIOM DICTIONARY

One of the two main aims of this study was to investigate what information value there was to be found in the typical special dictionary of English idioms containing a proper name. In this investigation information value refers to historical background, whether in the form of a name (whether the forbear or inventor of, or model for, the personage in question), historical source, date, derivation and other similar data helping the reader in forming an idea of the idiom's origins, particularly the origins of its proper name constituent. And, most preferably, an idea as genuine and truthful (i.e. close to historical reality) as possible. As the truth-value for each account in each compilation is obviously impossible for the present author to establish with absolute reliability, only a standard work of general etymology could be resorted to in order to solve this problem; and the standard work here could be none other than

the Oxford English Dictionary, whose second edition (1989) was available at the time of this investigation.

More specifically, an emphatic statement is in place here: this study does not seek to prove whether the background report found for a particular proper name idiom in each source book is right or wrong, truthful or erroneous, but simply to compare the contents of these accounts, first between themselves, and second to the etymology provided in the OED and thereby to seek the highest probability in each case. This, let it be emphasized, is not necessarily the stand taken in the OED, especially in cases where its exposition, by force of sound argumentation presented in the sources, proves ungrounded or improbable.

In addition, to save room, these narratives are condensed as concise as possible - on occasion such a description may take up a page in the original source - in other words: they are reduced to the essentials. In each case, first a brief description - definition - if provided in the OED (there are cases of non-definition), is given, followed by the following general data: derivation, date, and other relevant background details. Where any of these individual details is identical or closely resembles the data offered by the OED, or, in the case of non-coverage in the OED, the best-grounded data in any of the sources, this is merely stated in the assessment following the reference data mentioned above. In those cases where the details provided by

each source differ from those in the OED, or in some of the other sources appearing as the most relevant and pertinent, these differences are mentioned briefly at the relevant points. Finally, whenever possible, a suggestion is made towards the most plausible rendition among the presented, as a result of careful comparison of the sources and the OED.

The principles for the establishment of the information value of each idiom compilation - as well as that of the OED - are as follows.

Each of the main items of information, i.e. the derivation (forebear for the proper name element), the source where the relevant data are available, the date of the idiom's first (preferably recorded and thus accurately fixed) use, and any other background data, which, when 'complete', helps to cover the omission of any of the previous items of information. The scale from nought (0) to three (3) was assumed to cover all the essential aspects of information appreciated by the general student of English idioms.

As a brief example, nought stands for a case where no essentials are to be found beyond the definition (this is a matter of course in an ordinary dictionary); the reader, in other words, becomes none the wiser for the information, or rather, lack of information. The maximal score, on the other hand, represents an account covering all the elements of a comprehensive report: it provides the name of the person (place) who (which), if not the idiom's inventor (model) -

remaining unidentified surprisingly often - is known to have helped in establishing it in common usage; the source, such as a literary piece of work where it was (first) found; the date, for instance that of a publication (printed work), performance (on stage) or announcement (speech); and other relevant background information such as the situation where the idiom was first heard in use. For closer scrutiny, these figures are presented in Appendix 1. For practical reasons, any source containing several volumes, instanced by Collins's Book of English Idioms (CollId) with three volumes, and Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English (OxfId) with two, are each respectively classified and investigated as one work.

VI. DICTIONARY ANALYSIS

VI.1. INTRODUCTORY INQUIRY INTO INFORMATION ON THE HUNDRED COLLECTED PROPER NAME IDIOMS AS ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE STUDIED IDIOM DICTIONARIES AND IN THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

The following inquiry is based on the accounts found for the hundred most frequent idioms in the selected ten idiom compilations, compared with one another and with the explanations in the OED.

As for the coding used below, the letter 'S' stands for the best and most comprehensive score among the sources (idiom dictionaries), and 'D' for the coverage in the OED; the grades range from nought (0) to three (3). To find the score of individual compilations for each idiom, see Appendix 1.

1. Darby & Joan: an attached husband and wife, especially in advanced years.

Quoting Henry Woodfall's poem in the Gentleman's Magazine of 1735, no historical figures are claimed by the OED, unlike Brewer, for this idiom: John Darby & wife Joan, the former having died in 1730, five years prior to the ballad by Henry Woodfall, who served his apprenticeship to Mr Darby. By another account, also in Brewer, the couple lived in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The OED view is shared by ChambId.

Finding the suggested writer, Henry Woodfall, is claimed

impossible in CollId, at least in the catalogue of the British Museum or in the Dictionary of National Biography. In support, a claim is made that the former holds records of **several** songs titled 'Darby & Joan', the earliest by Barker, reputedly published in 1800, thus postdating the OED by 65 years. OxfId is satisfied with any of a number of 18th - 19th century ballads as its origin. Belief in the authenticity of the view taken by the OED is shared also by Noble, with a quote from She Stoops to Conquer (1774) by Goldsmith, while an 18th century ballad is upheld by LongId, a view also shared by R&S, in partial agreement with Brewer, namely that the writer, Mr Woodfall was once apprenticed to a London printer **John Darby** (d.1740) whose wife was called **Joan**'. Thus it comes closest to Brewer's postulation of historical figures with a fixed lifetime. **COMMENT:** For want of 'hard' evidence, it is deemed fit by the OED to hold 'allegedly' to the eponymous poem by Henry Woodfall in Gentleman's Magazine of 1735 (V.153) and thereby stand on firm ground. Thus the historical existence of the couple 'modelling' for his poem remains unsettled. S3/D2

2.(any/every) Tom, Dick and/or Harry: any male representatives of the common people.

The derivations of all source compilations are in accord with that of the OED, in which the first use is as of 1734, while in Brewer and Noble it is dated to Victorian times. Both

derivation and dating are missing from ChambId. Henry IV by Shakespeare is quoted, besides in the OED, also in CollId, with the addition that the variant with Harry (Shakespeare's version being Tom, Dick and *Francis*) came into use in the Victorian age (also in Brewer's view). Derivation is missing from LongId and OxfId. **COMMENT:** Timing could not be much rounder than merely 'Victorian times', yet the rest, failing any dates, are pre-empted by Brewer, CollId and Noble. S2/D3

3.smart alec(k)/Alec(k): (originally American for) a would be clever person, a know-all.

As in the OED, this phrase is attributed to the Americans also by Brewer, with the addition that it goes back to the 1860s (OED's first quote 1865), with no record of Aleck's identity. To the Americans of c.1870 it is also ascribed in ChambId, yet with an unknown origin. Both derivation and dating are ignored by LongId as well as OxfId. **COMMENT:** Brewer and ChambId acquit themselves well, as no theory of the origin of the idiom is put forth by any other source, the OED included. S1/D1

4.merry-andrew/Andrew: one who entertains people by means of antics or buffoonery; a clown; (in early use) a mountebank's assistant.

The source quoted in the OED is also stated in Brewer, Thomas Hearne (d.1735), referring the phrase to Andrew Boorde

(d.1549), Henry VIII's physician, a learned man and a great eccentric. Brewer is echoed in Noble in all details. **COMMENT:** Thomas Hearne's allusion to Andrew Boorde appears to carry neither evidence nor intrinsic probability in the eyes of the OED, in spite of his reputation for buffoonery. This orthodox view is also held in Pepys's account (1688) of having seen at Bartholomew Fair a ridiculous play called '*Marrey Andrew*'; to the OED it carries no conviction to entitle a connection with the phrase. As to the sources, it would be only natural to learn that Brewer - by means of his first edition in 1870 - was the 'donor', and Noble the 'recipient', of this information (via the OED or not). In fact, the account in Noble begins: "A theory of derivation is that ...". S3/D2

5.clever dick: a clever person; (also ironically for) a know-all.

The idiom is defined in Brewer, LongId and OxfId in few words, while all other data is lacking. **COMMENT:** One of the rather few cases of total ignorance on the part of idiom dictionaries, a situation which is but little improved by the OED, with the first dates cited as of 1895 and 1677. S0/D1

6.Black Maria: (originally American for) a van for conveyance of prisoners.

The same, traditional, derivation (not stated in the OED) is catered by Brewer, Funk, Hunt, Noble, and R&S; namely from

Maria Lee, "a negress of fearsome proportions and fiery spirit, who kept a sailors' lodging house in Boston and helped the police in tracing and capturing offenders" (Hunt). Two more alternatives are served in Noble. In the British option, a connection is suggested to the notorious murder of a girl called *Maria Marten*, for which a man was hanged in 1828; an incident that gave rise to several plays and stories, most notably a melodrama produced in London in 1840. The second version is by Laurie Dickinson, assistant to Thomas Edison, in allusion to a *movie studio*, probably the first, built by him in 1893: 'It was a shed, *painted black inside out*, resting on a revolving base which could be turned to follow the sun and thus keep the actors brightly lighted against black backgrounds'. **COMMENT:** This last suggestion seems rather awkward in the light that the first quotes are from the mid-19th century, half a century prior to this. An estimate in Funk has the birth of this term in the early 19th century: it was carried, in its view, over the Atlantic by British sailors offending the law at her house; a view also supported by the fact that the term was first applied to a *prison van* in London, not to a police van. In Brewer, its first use is put to the Boston area of the 1840s. What appears odd here is that in the most authoritative work of reference, the OED, no account is given as to how this phrase came to be dressed in female clothing. All dating is failed by two sources, namely Hunt, and R&S. S3/D2

7.Aunt Sally: (a game of this name, and hence) an object of prejudiced attack.

In Brewer alone, the figurative sense of 'an target for criticism or attack', included in other sources, is missing. This might be accounted for by the early date of its initial publication (1870), as the first instance of its use cited in the OED in the figurative sense, is of 1898, and the second as of 1958. (Later editions might have contained this item, yet non-updated.) This span perhaps also accounts for the knowledgeability in the otherwise less informative OxfId and LongId, now excelling in the coverage of the extended meaning of the idiom. No estimates of established use are ventured by either two. In the latter is a quotation from Punch from 1974 - more than 70 years after the first occurrences by the OED of the figurative sense. **COMMENT:** It is most surprising that no dates of instanced use are offered by any of the source compilations, since this has been a popular pastime known to each compilation (as witnessed by their derivations). S2/D2

8.Soapy Sam: (adjectively for) ingratiating, suave, unctuous. Brewer is in agreement with the OED in that the manners of the idiom's founding father, Bishop *Samuel Wilberforce*, are discussed ('his persuasive and unctuous way of speaking'); not the how and when. Also the floral decorations forming the letters S.O.A.P., the initials of Sam Oxon and Alfred Port,

are touched upon as a remarkable coincidence. Rehabilitation for the poor bishop is sought in Hunt: he was apparently unfairly labelled as a 'hypocrite' (Hunt's own definition of Soapy Sam), since his learning, wit and religious sincerity were commended by Carlyle. Also the other allusion (given above by Brewer) to the S.O.A.P. inscription above the Bishop's stall is given in Hunt. In yet another version the bishop is reputed with a reference to his habitual hot bath as "always coming out with clean hands". This last saying is also quoted in Brewer, M&M, and Noble, in which are also brought forth the bishop's efforts to smooth things over between men of opposing points of view. His lifetime is stated in sources. **COMMENT:** In the OED derivation, great care is taken not to name Mr Wilberforce, yet allowing him into its quote; thus - indirectly - implying his function as (at least potential) origins to this idiom. In a realistic view, this policy of 'exaggerated caution' is on one hand neither creditable to any courtesy towards any party possibly involved in the birth of an idiom, nor is it estimable to the editorial team, at least by way of showing shrewdness in not suggesting or commenting upon anything that cannot be confirmed as an absolute truth or at least tenably corroborated. This method of "excess of justifiable defence" appears unjustified in excluding a wealth of information, whether true or erroneous, on account of which a great many background details might be better understood. S3/D2

9.Uncle Sam: the government or the people of the U.S.A.

The origins discarded in the OED are proposed in Brewer: the frequent appearance of the initials **U.S.** on government supplies to the army. In addition, a suggestion is made to a person with these initials, who allegedly had connection with army supplies. The first recorded uses of the phrase occurred in the district of Troy, New York, about 1812; i.e. a year prior to the OED date. Brewer is reiterated in ChambId (from Troy c.1812, probably from the initials U.S. stamped on government supplies). In Hunt, Noble, and R&S this phrase is derived from the initials U.S.(A.). The latest work is in agreement with the OED in its wish to confirm this by two dates and sources of appearance: Troy Post of September 7, 1813; and The Adventures of Uncle Sam 1816, a book whose author, however, is not stated. In the R&S opinion much of the cartoonist's picture owes to Sam's predecessor Jack Downing. **COMMENT:** Another instance of decent attention paid by the OED to the derivative path proffered by all sources, whose record is, most probably, derived from Brewer, again. In none of the sources this proposition is proved a watertight case. Nonwithstanding, the exposition in the OED appears estimable by at least discussing the evidence available in the sources. S3/D3

10.doubting Thomas: (allusively from) the doubting apostle.

The biblical personage and the same context (John XX:25) are to be found in all the sources. The first instances of recorded use cited in the OED appear relatively late: 1848 and 1883. In Brewer, ChambId, CollId, Hunt, LongId, M&M, Noble, and OxfId no attempts are made at dating the idiom.

COMMENT: The late date of instanced use seem rather odd, to say the least, against the fact that the Bible has been available to the English readership for more than 600 years; by Wyclif's first translation 1382 and by the most beloved, King James' version, for some 400 years. S2/D2

11.peeping Tom: a prying person; a voyeur.

The legend associated with the idiom is touched in the OED only in passing; a quotation from Grose's Dictionary as its first observed user (1796). Brewer proves more fertile: in 1040 Lord of Coventry imposed certain exactions on his tenants, which his lady besought him to remove. He promised this if she would ride naked through the town. She did, and by her order everyone kept indoors at the time, except for a tailor, peeping through his window, becoming struck blind as a consequence. This data, somewhat condensed, is echoed in ChambId. A mere definition is provided in OxfId, while an insertion is found in Funk that this story is originally told by an unknown writer of the 12th century, i.e. at least a score of years after the death of her ladyship (c.1080). To the point that this legend is discussed by Drayton, Leigh

Hunt, Tennyson, and Landor, and its birth is referred by Hunt to the reign of Edward the Confessor (i.e. 1003-1066). A mere definition of the term is offered in LongId (a voyeur), while a detailed description is provided by M&M, with a loose date to the Anglo-Saxon period. Noble and R&S are contented with a 'voyeur'. **COMMENT:** Somewhat odd is the lack of dating in LongId, Noble, and R&S, when plenty of data is available in earlier sources such as Brewer, Funk, Hunt, and M&M; the former three sources usually provide at least some background data. S3/D2

12.Uncle Tom: a Black (as regarded especially by other Blacks) behaving in a servile or ingratiating way towards white people.

In Brewer is added the user group of this term: the Black Nationalists; with derivation from Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) by Harriet Beecher-Stowe. This suit is followed in LongId on both counts, with the derogatory tone also stated. **COMMENT:** Invariably, when a proper name idiom has a literary origin, its coverage presents few problems. Is this the reason why so few idiom dictionary compilers here have validated this phrase? S3/D2

13.Alice in Wonderland: fantastic.

The same derivation is shared by both sources; in meaning some shades are found. LongId is surpassed by Brewer in the

provision of background data: the name Alice derives from **Alice Liddell**, daughter of Dean Liddell, the joint author of Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon. **COMMENT:** Perhaps Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland' was such a household work that the majority of the present collections held this idiom self-evident enough to 'every Tom, Dick and Harry' to ignore out. S3/D3

14.Adam's ale: (humorously for) water.

The same route of derivation as provided in the OED ('water being the only drink for our distant forebears) is to be found also in Brewer with the addition of its Scottish variant, **Adam's wine**. In ChambId, Hunt, LongId, Noble, R&S this suit is followed, with an occasional supplement of the said alternative. No approximations are presented of the first usage. **COMMENT:** Although our legendary progenitor will precede the doubting Thomas by a wide margin, and a considerable length of time has lapsed since his prime as well as the rise of the Christian faith in Western Europe, this idiom is not traceable to an earlier date than 1643 (OED). S1/D2

15.King Charles's head: an obsession or fixed idea.

In full agreement with the OED, the literary source of this phrase is in Brewer dated to 1850, with the depiction of Mr Dick, its originator, as one eventually always getting round

to this subject, because he simply couldn't keep it out of his thoughts. In CollId a mere definition is given, but in OxfId also Dickens's lifetime (1812-70) is quoted. Only a definition is also provided by Hunt, while in LongId the said work is dated to 1849-50. **COMMENT:** Again, a literary idiom is easily defined, derived and backgrounded. S3/D3

16.St Martin's summer: a season of fine mild weather about Martinmas.

A late spell of fine weather is preferred in Brewer, with origins in *St. Martin's day* (November 11), and addition of its American counterpart 'Indian summer'. The above data is echoed in Hunt, and Noble, with an insertion in the latter pinpointing it as occurring exactly between *St Luke's day* (18th October) and *St. Martin's day* (11th November). No dating is attempted. **COMMENT:** Perhaps an occurrence like this referring possibly as far back as when such commemoration days of Church saints gradually became established is rather difficult to pinpoint to any clearly definable point of time. This is perhaps evidenced by the first date provided by the OED, as to as early as 1591 in Shakespeare. S2/D3

17.Nancy (boy): an effeminate man or boy; a homosexual.

This term is expressed bluntly by Brewer: a 'homosexual', deriving 'possibly' from *Miss Nancy* (an effeminate youth), which itself 'possibly' derives from *Mrs Anne Oldfield* (1683-

1730), nicknamed 'Narcissa'. Besides a preference for milder phrasing, Brewer's account is echoed in Hunt in all - also in provision of the social background: 'the leading actress of her time, as well as a woman of beauty and conspicuous generosity'. In LongId Nancy boy is looked at as a man who behaves in a girlish manner, especially a homosexual; with its derivation in more general lines: **Nancy** is one of the several female names (e.g. 'cissy', 'nellie') used of men who are thought to be too much like women in behaviour, appearance, etc. No dates are suggested. Since 1904 and 1918 are provided in the OED as its first instances, there should thus lie almost two centuries between the model and her 'copies'. **COMMENT:** True to a preconceived outlook, great care is taken in the OED not to venture a suggestion towards the said actress, as she cannot be confirmed as its true originator. This overcautious attitude lends some invalidating effect on the informative value of its investigations. S3/D2

18. Ted(dy) (boy/girl): a youth affecting the style of dress typical of Edward VII's reign; (extended use for) a youthful street rowdy.

This phrase is derived in all sources from 'Teddy', the familiar form of Edward, here referring to *Edward VII*. The OED data is improved by Brewer in the supplement of temporal detail: a 1950s youth distinguished for antisocial behaviour

and peculiar clothing, deriving from the Edwardian (King Edward VII 1901-1910) style of dress these youths liked to wear. With no dates, a teddy is referred in M&M to a London equivalent to American leather-jacketed, duck-tailed, teenage punks; deriving from the tightly fitted 'Edwardian' jackets and trousers they affected. In Noble the preference is on a bullying and violent youth of the fifties, clashing with the public and the police; elegant in appearance, anti-social in outlook; a smarter precursor of the 'Hell's angel' of the sixties. The suggestion of R&S is to gangs of working class boys in the mid-1950s affecting a style of dress with long jackets, narrow trousers and thick-soled shoes. Linked with rock 'n 'roll music to the rockers/greasers of the sixties. **COMMENT:** Here is one of the few instances where the contributors to both the OED and to the source compilations have succeeded with 'flying colours': definition, derivation as well as dating are exemplary. S3/D3

19.Tommy rot: nonsense; twaddle.

While a direct derivation is missing from the OED (in implying one, rather), an exhaustive and unevasive account is produced in Brewer: '*Tommy*' being slang for 'food'; initially said of the provisions received at a '*Tommy shop*', i.e. a shop under the 'truck system' where coupons given by the employer could be exchanged by the worker for goods. No dating is furnished to complete the otherwise ample data.

Brewer (whose first edition is the earliest among all source compilations) is, again, echoed by CollId word for word, except for derivation: "How a common form of Thomas should have come to be used as an emphasiser of nonsense is obscure". Also in R&S, food or provisions are being referred to, with the term derived from the overvalued goods once received as part of wages at *Tommy shops*, i.e. the company-owned food stores, until this practice, known as 'truck system', became illegal. According to it, Tommy is still used by some industrial workers for the food they take to eat at work. No dates are provided by it, either. **COMMENT:** The OED account is amply equalled by those in all sources by their solid, matter-of-fact coverage of the idiom; the only flaw being the failure, as if by common consent, to date this saying at all: the mere term 'truck system' makes the student uninitiated in English social history none the wiser. (A check in an encyclopedia states this system fully abolished in 1940.) S2/D3

20.(as) happy as Larry: extremely happy.

While this idiom is stamped in the OED with 'etymology uncertain', it is deemed to be Australian in origin by Brewer, with a suggested model in **Larry Foley** (1847-1917), the noted boxer. Again, a mere meaning is provided in LongId and OxfId. **COMMENT:** Brewer appears to have derived his information from an Australian source: Australian Language

(1966) by Baker, which reads: "Possibly but not certainly commemorating the noted Australian pugilist Larry Foley (1847-1917)". This quote is also available in the OED, without any consideration, however, to its likelihood as origins. Nevertheless, at least some idea is thus given of a possible birth of this idiom. S3/D2

21. (as) pleased as Punch: an allusive phrase (expressing what, is not stated by the OED).

In the puppet show '*Punch and Judy*' are illustrated the wicked actions of its eponymous male character, also apparent on the cover of Punch (the satirical magazine). These facts are common to all sources. Brewer's addition is that the show was introduced into England about the time of Restoration from Italy, where it was brought to its present form by Silvio Fiorillo, an Italian comedian, c.1600. All names and dates, instead, are ignored in ChambId and OxfId. The above account by Brewer is echoed in CollId, with reference, however, to the derivation by Eric Partridge, "whose suggestion is that the original allusion was to the expression on the face of Punch as depicted on the covers of early issues of Punch" (with none dated). Another detailed derivation is given in Funk: from a "*Punch and Judy Show*" originating in Naples about 1600, attributed to a comedian, Silvio Fiorello; the original name of the main character being **Pulcinello**, later in England modified to **Punchinello**,

and finally contracted to Punch. Also the eponymous humorous British weekly, founded in 1841, owes its name to this old comic show. Also the derivation in LongId is 'probably' from the cheerful pictures of the character Punch, who appeared on the covers of Punch magazine in the 1840s. **COMMENT:** Hence a decent dating is provided only in Funk and LongId, at least for the magazine itself; the dated use of the actual phrase is not ventured by any of the compilers. This is a second instance (the first being *doubting Thomas*) where no definition at all is provided in the OED (in the former case the blunt statement read "allusively from the doubting apostle"). Here "an allusive phrase" is the solution resorted to, with no attempt to define what this allusion might suggest to the average reader. S3/D1

22.as poor as Job's turkey: (originally American for) a type of poverty.

The OED "definition" is excelled by Brewer in information value: in allusion to the unfortunate miser in the Bible with suggestion to someone even poorer than Job, coined by "**Sam Slick**" (*Thomas Chandler Haliburton*) in the 1830s. This route is also taken in Funk, with the insertion of the birth date (1796) of Haliburton, better known under the pen name "Sam Slick". In Haliburton's own words Job's turkey was so poor that he had but one feather to his tail and had to lean against the fence to gobble. This account goes back to his

sketches for a local newspaper in the early 1830s. **COMMENT:** The source and dating are shared in both compilations, thus surpassing by far the scanty data provided by the OED. On occasion, the derivational and other supporting data furnished by the OED appears vaguely, inaccurately or non-illustratively formulated. One instance of this is the above. To make it more to the point, the OED description could have read, for instance, as follows: 'an American jocular expression for 'extremely poor''. S3/D0

23.by George: a mild oath; or a mere exclamation.

In Brewer a connection is suggested: St George, the *patron saint of England*, once being the battle-cry of English soldiers. This is further nuanced in LongId: rather an old-fashioned interjection showing surprise, disbelief, annoyance, etc., yet with no explicit derivation given, but seen synonymous to 'by God!'. No dates furnished by either.

COMMENT: While St George is mentioned among its quotes by the OED, no indication, again, is being made that the latter, modern, form might have evolved, or rather, contracted, from it. Fortunately, this chain of developments examined by Brewer. Both sources, however, share the failure in dating, which is very crudely deducible from the quotes furnished by the OED, the first going back to 1598, in its earlier version ('for George'). S2/D2

24. not on your Nellie: (slang for) not on your life!

In accord with the OED, this phrase is labelled in Brewer as British slang, with its sense and derivation by the OED also shared: via rhyming slang Nellie Duff in *not on your Nellie Duff* - as it originally read - standing for 'puff' or 'breath', i.e. 'life'; also noting its vulgar tinge, probably due to some dubious meaning ascribed to 'Nelly', but not dating it. This data is agreed upon by ChambId, while not as much as a derivation is bothered by OxfId. In LongId these details are also provided, with failure, in turn, in dating.

COMMENT: Attempts to date this idiom are absent in each compilation. The first instanced use recorded by the OED is as of 1941; and for that of 1961, Eric Partridge is cited to elucidate its formation from rhyming slang. Both these dates, however, would seem fairly late in view of the hey-day of rhyming slang coming to an end with the WWI. S2/D3

25. (to give) a Roland for an Oliver: (to give) as good as one gets, a tit for tat.

The concise, cold data furnished by the OED is elaborated on in Brewer. This most famous twosome of *Charlemagne's* (714-814) noble '*paladins*' are so similar that it is difficult to keep them apart; what one achieved was accomplished by the other and vice versa; finally they met and allegedly fought for five days without the least advantage gained by either. With no actual dates, quotes are offered from Shakespeare

(Henry VI) and Edward Hall, 'the historian almost a century before Shakespeare', as using the names of the two, not the actual phrase. The legend is reiterated in CollId, the dating now reduced to the 'knights of Charlemagne'. Some background is also provided by Hunt, with the Chanson de Roland, set to the 11th century, and a quote from Henry VI by Shakespeare.

COMMENT: As to when this idiom gained currency, is ignored in CollId, and Hunt, while in Brewer the reader is taken to a period from the mid-15th century to the 16th; rather early in comparison with the first quote by the OED (1616). S3/D3

26.for Pete's sake: a mild exclamation or a phrase of annoyance.

An exclamation of astonishment or protest is preferred in OxfId; often accompanying an appeal or order to do/not to do something. Synonymous to 'God' in '*for God's sake!*'. In LongId it is termed as a colloquial interjection expressing impatient annoyance or surprise, especially in questions or requests, and synonymous to '*for God's/Christ's sake!*'

COMMENT: In both compilations this male personage is regarded as an euphemism for God; with no closer account, however, of the most intriguing issue as to why exactly *Pete(r)* out of all male Christian names. No dates of established use are suggested in neither, while it is dated in the OED to at least as early as 1924. S1/D2

27.for the love of Mike: (exclamation of exasperation or surprise) for goodness' sake.

In ChambId, an 'expression of exasperation or surprise is heard, with a mark of an Irishism but no other data given, while it is approximated as an exclamation of astonishment, dismay or the like in OxfId, sometimes used to introduce an appeal; this usage clearly appears in the seven quotes furnished by the OED: only two of them may be interpreted as not 'introducing an appeal', whether contained in the same sentence or following in another. Mike is synonymed by OxfId with 'God' in '*for the love of God*', the only drawback in its account being the want for derivation. It is seen also as a euphemism in LongId, if a less common one, for '*for the love of God!*, or '*for the love of Christ!*'; or in more linguistic terms 'an interjection expressing surprise or annoyance in questions, requests and the like'. **COMMENT:** No derivation is attempted in these three idiom collections, while some idea of the idiom's gaining currency is provided by the first OED quotes: 1922 and 1925. S1/D2

28.not to know (a person) from Adam: not to recognize a person.

Adam is regarded in ChambId as referring to the 'archetype of all men', with no dating, however. This is agreed upon by CollId, which is a little more explanatory in its derivation: Adam standing for *any man*, the implication is of inability to

identify a man as this person rather than any other. CollId's view is agreed upon with OxfId, with the label 'informal', but without any derivation. In Funk's addition, the person in question might have been once known but is **now** forgotten. Its suggested derivation is from Adam's *navel*, his possession of which was once a point much argued: many famous painters depicted the first couple with navels, what many critics could not accept, protesting: 'Otherwise one couldn't tell ordinary people from Adam!' In LongId, in turn, the sense is derived in allusion to the vast distance in time between Adam - the first human - and his present-day offspring; hence it is nowadays completely impossible for us to know him.

COMMENT: No dates are ventured for the first instances of use, while the reader is set back by some two centuries (the first OED dates of use fall to 1784 and 1795). S2/D3

29. (And) Bob's your uncle: everything is all right.

'That will be all right; you needn't bother any more, just leave it to me', is rendered by Brewer, with a suggestion to nepotism where Balfour was promoted by his uncle **Robert Cecil** (Lord Salisbury), Prime Minister, to the post of Chief Secretary of Ireland in the late 19th century. Brewer's view on meaning is agreed by OxfId, yet with no background data. This is the case also in LongId, with the addition that this phrase is used "*especially when something good has happened suddenly or without difficulty*". The same meaning as by

Brewer is furnished in R&S; and also the same background data, elaborated with some chronological details: from the appointment of Arthur Balfour as Secretary for Ireland by his uncle Robert Cecil, the Prime Minister (Lord Salisbury); *the phrase becoming current c.1890*. **COMMENT:** Oddly, the possibility of this derivation path is not even touched upon in the OED, the viability of which would find support from the first dates of use furnished in it: 1939 and 1946. S3/D2

30.to raise Cain: (originally American for) to make a disturbance; to create trouble or confusion.

Since rather an indeterminate picture is rendered by this OED depiction as to what the idiom is ultimately to signify, it appears necessary to study how 'raising Cain' is defined in the idiom compilations. To Brewer this is to raise the devil, play hell, make an angry fuss or noisy disturbance, with derivation alternatively from Cain, or from the Devil, or from allusion to his violent anger which drove him to kill his brother (Genesis 4:5). A quotation from A Ballad of the Bolivar (1890) by Kipling is given. Only the meaning is given in ChambId, while in CollId a mention is made of the raising spirit in Cain, the murderer of his brother, as a symbol of unrestrained violence. No dating offered, however. The meaning is further modified in OxfId: *to complain, protest, exert one's authority angrily or violently*. Derived from Bible (Genesis 15:12). No dating. An additional, if

unsubstantiated, derivation is offered in Funk: from a play with words: in Ireland and Scotland the Gaelic word 'cain' (also 'kain', 'cane') has meant the rent of land, payable in produce; thus one who 'raises cain' is actually raising the produce to pay for his land. Any of the Irish or Scottish settlers in the United States may have used the phrase literally in all seriousness to a jocular neighbour. No dates are ventured here, either. No definition is being provided by Hunt beyond the literal (to murder one's brother), as evidenced in the Bible, while in LongId the preference is on the derived meaning (making noise or trouble; behaving or speaking violently), relating to a biblical origin. No dating. The phrase's (originally) euphemistic use is emphasized in M&M ('to raise the devil'), deriving from the Bible. Excepting Brewer, in no compilation an attempt is made at dating. **COMMENT**: Ultimately, it would seem that the OED is here excelled by the idiom compilations in delineating the idiom in such a way as to leave no doubt of its true sense and implication; failure in dating remains their only flaw, excepting Brewer, whose first quote, however, succeeds the first two by the OED (1840 and 1841) by five decades. S3/D1

31.to out-Herod Herod: to outdo in evil or extravagance.

Again, it appears that somewhat more explicit terms **could** be used in the OED to define this idiom. This flaw is corrected by the nuances furnished by the sources. In Brewer this

phrase is interpreted as outdoing the worst of tyrants in wickedness, with derivation "after the murderer of innocent babes in the Bible" (Matthew 2:16), without a date, however. In CollId it equals with exceeding in wickedness even the most notoriously wicked character, modelled after King Herod, especially owing to his massacre of the children in Bethlehem. In addition, Hamlet (III,ii) is quoted in support: "I would have such a fellow whipped for o'er doing Termagant; it out-Herods Herod". In OxfId, in turn, this phrase is synonymous with being extremely wicked, cruel, or violent; derived as above, but with an insert of it serving as a working model for other similar phrases (implying exceeding someone in a quality mentioned or understood; e.g. to *out-Napoleon Napoleon*. Hamlet is subsequently given as the actual origins, without actual dating of established use, while in LongId, with these details rendered, Hamlet is dated to 1604, and also some other old plays about the life of Jesus added as potential origins, also furnishing: 'to **out-Judas Judas**'. **COMMENT:** While also of biblical origin, this idiom has, apparently by force of Shakespeare's literary power, become more definitely anchored in time than, for instance, *doubting Thomas, to raise Cain, or not to know a person from Adam*', behind which there is no such mighty influence. S3/D2

32.to take the mick(e)y out of someone: to act satirically, disrespectfully or teasingly towards someone.

Once more, the rather vague notion by the OED is helped to gain some vigour from the definitions in the compilations. In Brewer this expression is defined as 'to tease and humiliate one; to undermine one's self-esteem', without derivation or dating; while in ChambId it is synonymed with to 'ridicule a person', also with no derivation offered to the phrase. It is stamped as slang or taboo in OxfId, meaning to mock, ridicule one - *in the hope, or with the effect, of irritating him:* with a colloquial synonym substituted: 'to take the piss out of someone', but no derivation given. In LongId it is deemed colloquial, and described in detail: to make fun of (a person, statement, idea), especially by expressing one's scorn of the serious or solemn manner in which a person acts or an idea is expressed. The idiom is regarded also in it as a more acceptable form of 'to take the piss out of sb/stg' (impolite slang); and derived 'probably' from 'to take the *Mick(e)y Bliss*, rhyming slang for 'to take the piss'. No dating provided, however. 'To tease or make fun of someone' is preferable to R&S; with derivation from the *English stereotyped image of the stupid Irishman*. No date given, either. Derivation is attempted by two sources only, dating by none. **COMMENT:** Here the spiritless and languid definition of the OED is compensated for by its ability of at least dating this phrase back to the early fifties (1952 and 1954 as its first two quotes). S2/D2

33.to mollycoddle: to coddle; to take excessive care.

In Brewer this idiom is identical with 'to fuss over, to pamper; also substantively (pampered creature, a 'namby pamby'), yet no derivation is discussed. Brewer is echoed almost word for word in CollId, in derivation from 'Molly' (a pet-name for Mary) only - perhaps the verb (to coddle) adopted as a self-explanatory constituent in the compound. No date is given, either. A definition with a description is furnished in R&S: to treat someone in the manner appropriate to weaklings; also derived from (*Miss*) *Molly*, possibly alluded to Latin *mollis*, 'soft', together with an approximation of dating: an 18th century term for an effeminate or physically weak male; and definition of the verb compound: 'to coddle' is to pamper or spoil. **COMMENT:** Here, for a change, all the essentials required by the keen student are catered for by R&S: derivation, background, as well as (even if very summary) dating. S3/D2

34.to rob Peter to pay Paul: to discharge from one debt by incurring another.

The definition by the OED is agreeable Brewer, ChambId, CollId, Funk, LongId, and R&S, this last work condensing it neatly: to satisfy one by depriving another'. In CollId an implication is inserted of thereby committing an injustice. Interestingly, there is remarkable difference between individual derivations: In Brewer's claim there are none with

dependable origin; tradition derives the saying from the *Abbey of St. Peter, Westminster*, which was granted cathedral status in 1540, to be restored to its former standing only ten years later, when joined to the diocese of London with many of its estates appropriated to the repairs of *St. Paul's Cathedral*. This was, in its estimate, however, a common saying long before, e.g. used by Wyclif about 1380. In ChambId the fact is given of these saints' sharing the same feast day (29th July) in addition to the names' alliteration power. The tradition quoted above by Brewer is reproduced in CollId - with reference to the Rev. W.M. Atkins, Librarian of St Paul's Cathedral, in agreement that it at least gained popularity by the transaction described. In addition, a cite is produced from Wycliffe (c.1380): "Lord, how should God approve that you *rob Peter, and give this robbery to Paul* in the name of Christ?" with reference of this quote to the OED, which was, however, not found by the present author under this phrase. In Funk it is derived through French (12th century) after Latin model "Tamquam si quis crucifigeret Paulum ut redimeret Petrum" (As it were that one would *crucify Paul in order to redeem Peter*). The English origins go back at least to the 14th century; with a variety of verbs used, e.g. 'one has *unclothed Peter to clothe Paul*', 'to rob' being the oldest recorded; e.g. in Select English Works by Wyclif, written about 1380. In LongId this saying is held rather old-fashioned; derived from the eponymous saints,

remembered by the Church on the same day, June 29th. No dating suggested. In R&S the lines proposed by Brewer are recapitulated, and supported with the same account, allegedly from the varying fortunes of St Peter's Abbey of Westminster and St Paul's Cathedral. In 1550 the former was given cathedral status, only to be deprived of this privilege ten years later and its revenues diverted to St Paul's. Some aspirations seem to materialize in R&S towards outdoing Brewer - which appears to be their source (on the evidence of its almost word for word rendition from the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable: with a careful note that "Unfortunately for this derivation, the phrase was used by Wycliff in the 14th century; thus it must be that Peter and Paul have been taken as contrasting figures from very early times". **COMMENT:** Exceptionally, no less than a dozen lines are devoted by the OED to the proposed origins, touching on the possibility of loan, a similar idiom being recorded in French as to 1611. No mention, however, is made of Wyclif, even the first OED quote is dated to 1562. Thus, this phrase is possibly derived from a French antecedent, which in turn may have its origin in a Latin phrase after which it became modelled. Whatever its birth, this idiom is assuredly the oldest among the source material of this study, dating back to c.1380 at the least, thus allowing a time span of some six centuries; the 'youngest' idiom being '*Murphy's Law*', whose first recorded use in Britain is claimed as in 1977 (by Alan Smith of R&S).

This, however, is not confirmed in the OED. At the same time, a comparison of the accounts of this phrase in Brewer on one hand, and R&S on the other, provides incontestable evidence for the former being copied by the latter, and, once again, without stating the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable as its source. S3/D2

35.Queen Anne's dead: (a phrase implying) stale news.

This saying is held by Brewer as a 'lighting retort' to a teller of stale news; derived from *Anne Hyde*, daughter of James II, reigning 1702-1714; with no closer dates of use. In CollId it is paraphrased as an interjection used by way of satirical comment on stale news (the equivalent of a current colloquialism, 'You're telling me'). Its earliest record of use is given as in 1722, by a Lady Pennyman, in a volume of her Miscellanies (1740), inserted in her poem on the funeral of Duke Marlborough: '*He's as dead as Queen Anne after she died*'. Hence the phrase '**as dead as Queen Anne**', used of things, practices, customs - not of persons - that are out of vogue or obsolete. It is merely defined in OxfId, while it is given in R&S as a parallel to a 'caustic rejoinder' to the retailer of old news, with a note that it was first mentioned in a ballad of 1722, which was politically significant and could scarcely go unmarked by any. **COMMENT**: Interestingly, the first instances of use in the OED are set to 1840 and 1859, again completely ignoring the data provided by Brewer.

And once more, this data was recapitulated in R&S, without a mention of this, "as is its wont". S3/D2

36.Box and Cox: two persons taking turns in sustaining a part, occupying a position, or the like.

The above OED account is detailed in Brewer: in the *eponymous play* Mrs Bouncer the landlady has let the same room to Box, a journeyman printer out all night, and Cox, a journeyman hatter out all day, concealing the existence of each from the other. The author (J.M. Morton 1811-1891) is also provided. A mere mention of this twosome in a 19th century farce is all data furnished by ChambId. In OxfId, the focus is on the verb, in the sense 'to keep failing to meet; to alternate in one's use of a house, room and the like'; also an opera of this name by Gilbert and Sullivan is quoted, but no dating is provided. Without any definition, the above background data is offered in Hunt, with nothing forgotten, nothing added.

COMMENT: In the case of an idiom with a literary origin like this, the data available in any adequate work of reference is reflected in idiom compilations, to the degree and detail they feel appropriate to their particular format of presentation. This view is here validated by ChambId and OxfId. S3/D3

37.Heath Robinson: an absurdly ingenious an impracticable device.

Derivations are all alike in the three compilations: from *William Heath-Robinson* (1872-1944), illustrator to the *Punch*; with differences in formulations for describing this contraption or its maker. In Brewer this means 'a complicated, ingenious, and fantastic piece of machinery', first appearing in Punch. In Hunt it is called an absurd contraption created by the brilliant draughtsman and illustrator of such mechanical devices in his drawings spiced with a gentle tilt at human absurdity. In R&S preference is given to elaborately and ingeniously improvised machinery developed by the English cartoonist specializing in such drawings, depicting, for instance, emergency repairs done with pieces of string, tin cans, bent nails, and the like. Its American implication would be called 'haywire'. **COMMENT:** In a case like this where all the relevant data is readily available to compilers, the final result rests with their willingness to share it with the reader, and, of course, within the scope set for their work as a source of information. Here the basic essentials are provided by all compilers: the origin, dating and background. S3/D3

38. (Colonel) Blimp: a pompous ex-officer voicing rooted hatred of new ideas.

Again, in all sources derivation is similar - the origin being all too well known - the descriptions and possible dating of use are of greater interest: In Brewer Col. Blimp

is an elderly gentleman opposed to all and any change; with the insertion of some interesting background: the term was developed between the wars and *originally used of an observation balloon in WW I*. In OxfId this figure is the embodiment of most of the undesirable qualities of an elderly reactionary as regards politics, the social scene, military affairs, and the like; the original character created during the 1930s. In LongId he is a man, especially one with a military background, who strongly supports old-fashioned ideas and distrusts all change, often shortened to '*Blimp*'. He was developed in David Lowe's humorous drawings from the late 1930s. Brewer's details are echoed in Noble: *Blimp* was also the name of an airship guarding specific targets from low-level attack in WW II, originally classified as *B-limp* - hence Colonel *Blimp*: an *inflated* gentleman with old-fashioned, dogmatic views. In R&S the reader meets with an utterly uninformed and unimaginative person with blind reactions; supplemented by note that David Low invented him when working for the Evening Standard of London. **COMMENT:** Another example with origins in the press. The facts are known to the average compilation, or at least to be found in any appropriate survey on newspapers. S3/D3

39.Admirable Crichton: a person excelling in any kind of studies and pursuits.

Once more, the derivation and date are bound to be similar, since the founding father is commonly known even to a would-be idiom compiler. Little variance is apparent in the descriptions, either: Brewer: a person distinguished by all-round talents; the original having been a Scottish traveller, scholar and swordsman. Hunt: (no definition); *James Crichton* was 'a scholar of amazing knowledge and memory, a man of remarkable grace and athletic prowess, and a considerable musician'. M&M: an outstanding physical and mental prodigy of one's age, the model having, at the age of 15, taken his M.A. and at 20 reputedly mastered a dozen languages and been knowledgeable in all the then-known sciences. Alternative origins are suggested, as well: from a manservant hero of this name in an eponymous play by J.M. Barrie, first performed in 1902, where he excels as the *very model of the British butler*. **COMMENT**: This latter namesake is treated in M&M with equal respect - and with all due respect, he perhaps proved worthy of the epithet in his own right; it does not, however, explicitly state which of the two, in its view, gave birth to the actual phrase. The true father to this idiom, irrespectively of whether the literary products based on his character (also on the play by Barrie) are true to his person and accomplishments, remains the selfsame James Crichton (1560-1585), who so impressed his contemporaries as well as posterity as to become a byword of personal excellence.

Barrie's play, incidentally, is dated to 1914 by the OED, while 1902 is the year rendered in all compilations. S3/D3

40.Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: opposite sides of a person's character, alternately good and evil.

The two aspects are elaborated in Brewer as Jekyll being "the would-do-good", and Hyde "the evil that is present". The above essentials (definition, source, and date) are repeated in the rest of the compilations: dating deplorably missing in ChambId, but full data given in Hunt, LongId, and OxfId (a Jekyll and Hyde), and R&S. **COMMENT:** A case of 'meat and potatoes': all essentials are known to compilers, and the facts accordingly disseminated to the reader. S3/D3

41.(gay) Lothario: a libertine; a gay deceiver.

The same source is referred to in all the six idiom collections; only the definitions somewhat differ: In Brewer 'a seducer of women, a debauchee'; adding the Rowe's work, he derives it originally from Cruel Brother by Davenant (1630). CollId finds 'a man who goes about irresponsibly making love to women', adding the author's life period (1678-1718). Hunt sees him as a gay libertine; LongId - labelling the term old-fashioned - a man who is well-known for his love affairs with many women. Noble talks of a philanderer, seducer or rake. R&S also finds this an antiquated term for a practised seducer of women, and also, surprisingly, derive this

directly from an eponymous character in The Cruel Brother (1630), a play by Robert Davenant. **COMMENT:** Another case of justifiably suspected plagiarism, and at that, not the first instance where R&S echoes Brewer, since no other source conveys this background data. Whether Brewer received this information from the OED or conversely remains unsolved by this study. S3/D3

42.the real McCoy/Mackay: (colloquial for) the genuine article, the real thing.

This is rather an interesting phrase, since it is defined, and, on occasion, also derived, rather differently. In Brewer, this is a person or thing of the highest quality; with two potential derivations suggested: since the 1890s certainly from the eponymous *American boxer*; yet prior to that - in Britain originally dating from the 1880s, according to Eric Partridge (a view apparently adopted also by Brewer here) - an idiom based on a Scottish expression 'the **Real MacKay**', which was applied to "*whisky, men, and things of the highest quality*". In ChambId is suggested 'something genuine, especially of very good quality, as contrasted with all other (inferior) things called by the same name'. No origins or dates are given. 'The true or genuine thing' is the preference in CollId, with reference to Eric Partridge; that 'Mackay' be an anglicized adaptation of 'McCoy', after Kid McCoy, the foremost lightweight boxer of his time (1921),

meaning in the U.S. 'genuine', 'excellent'. Before that date the term is said to have been used of Scotch whisky. 'A person or thing that is absolutely genuine' is the formulation by OxfId; especially of people and alcoholic drinks; 'the genuine article', 'the real thing'; yet with no derivation offered. 'The genuine article; the person or thing as represented' is the suggestion in Funk; with some caution, but also detail in derivation: **allegedly** c.1900 from *Kid McCoy*, the noted American boxer who, irritated by an intoxicated customer disputing on his acclaimed identity in a barroom, delivered him such a blow that the latter, recovered, confessed him to be "the real McCoy". This track is followed by LongId: the true, real, and original article or thing, especially something of the highest quality; with a possible derivation from Kid McCoy (1873-1940), an American boxer, who was called 'the real McCoy' **to show the difference between him and other boxers of the same name**. The phrase is neatly condensed in R&S as 'indisputably authentic'; with the above episode reproduced: traditionally associated with Kid McCoy, the boxer: a drunk picked a quarrel with the champion, who did all he could to avoid trouble. Informed by the bystanders of his identity the disbelieving brawler kept on until knocked out by him; conscious again he had to admit: "You're right, it's the real McCoy." As in Brewer and CollId, the Scottish version is also taken up by R&S: with preference to spelling 'Mackay', the dating goes back to the 1880s,

referring to a brand of whisky. Admittedly, also nowadays the phrase is regularly used to praise the quality of a drink. Whatever the origins, the expression seems to have emerged in the late 1920s. **COMMENT:** Thus two principal rivals have emerged: one, and the somewhat earlier of the two, from a brand of Scotch whisky; the other, reputedly some ten years later, from a noted American boxer by the same name. Which really was the first, 'the real thing', remains impossible to say - they might have originated separately, irrespective of each other. Overcautious as ever, any standing on the matter is shunned by the OED, and thus no help is offered to the uncertain student. S3/D3

43.Nosey Parker/nosey parker: an inquisitive person.

With some variance in both defining and deriving this appellation, both aspects are here briefly looked into. One "overfond of poking his nose into the business of others" is the view taken in Brewer; with a possible derivation from archbishop *Matthew Parker* (1504-1575), noted for his detailed inquiries into ecclesiastical affairs and the conduct of the clergy. A mere definition, again, is offered in both ChambId and CollId: one habitually trying to pry into other people's private affairs. To Hunt he is an unduly inquisitive and critical person; with origins also in Dr. *Matthew Parker* (1504-1575), Archbishop of Canterbury, noted for poking his nose into all matters of church ritual and ceremony; to

LongId a person who habitually attempts to find out about other people's private affairs; with no attempt at a derivation. Simply 'a prying person' is the preferred form in R&S; derived in compliance with tradition: after Matthew Parker, Queen Elizabeth's Archbishop of Canterbury. The reader's attention is sought to be called to the fact that 'In underworld slang a '**nose**' has long meant an 'informer', and '**pauk**' is dialectal for 'inquisitive'; rendering thus the involvement of Mr Parker, however apt, unnecessary. **COMMENT:** The latest proposition (by R&S) carries the airs of smart-alecky parade of knowledge (even if it be relevant and justified), yet by no means dispelling the stamp of authenticity from Mr Matthew Parker as the model for this idiom. S3/D2

44.Belisha beacon: a flashing post marking pedestrian crossings on the highway.

The OED data is echoed in Brewer, with the supplement that Mr *Leslie Hore-Belisha*, Minister of Transport 1931-1937, in fact introduced them - which makes their name viable. A step further is taken in M&M in claiming that they were so called by Mr Hore-Belisha himself, and dating their introduction to the early thirties. No new details are added by Noble to what has been stated above. **COMMENT:** A clear case. S3/D3

45. Buckley's chance: (Australian/New Zealandian colloquialism for) no chance at all; a forlorn hope.

An Australicism with two potential origins, identical in both sources. In Brewer's phrase 'an extremely remote chance'; with suggested origins in a convict of that name who escaped 1803 but was forced to live over thirty years among aborigines. Or from the Melbourne business house of *Buckley and Nunn* - hence the pun, "There are but two chances, Buckley's or none." Hence also the emphatic way of saying that there only is one feasible course of action to take: "There are two chances - mine and Buckley's". No dating for the latter. 'The most remote of chances' is echoed in R&S; with origins in *William Buckley*, a convict who escaped, and against incredible odds survived among the aborigines for thirty years. By coincidence, a Melbourne business called 'Buckley and Nunn' became linked in popular mind with this phrase. In a very tight corner one has two chances: Buckley's or none! Neither alternative is dated by either work.

COMMENT: Similar data is reported in both sources: as the definitions and background accounts are identical almost word for word (and thus an instance of plagiarism, by the latter from the former, is suggested). Interestingly enough, the first OED quotes are of as late as 1898 and 1901 - more than sixty years behind Mr Buckley's alleged rescue back to 'civilized people'. A fairly lengthy span, it would seem, even by the communications of those days, for a saying to be

born since the factual existence of the origin. Especially on the 'home ground' (Australian sources quoted by the OED for both versions), let alone to invade the native Britain. S3/D2

46.Buggins' turn: assigning appointment to persons in rotation rather than merit.

This turn is interpreted in ChambId as a part of the British promotion system based on service length or seniority, rather than on merit. Derivation and dating are missing. A procedure is preferred by OxfId by which posts are given not to the most capable of filling them, but to the relatively mediocre candidates as reward for a long and undistinguished service.

Also: **the principle of Buggins**. Buggins is seen as an *invented name*, to English ears both undistinguished and slightly comic, and therefore adopted. No approximation at dating is attempted, however. **COMMENT:** Both sources fail in that they leave one ignorant of even an approximation as to when this idiom might have gained popularity. The ignorant reader is, however, saved by the OED from total illiteracy by its record of earliest use: 1901 and 1917, which would suggest at least suggest its birth in the 19th century. S2/D3

47.Hobson's choice: the option of taking the thing offered or none.

Mr *Tobias Hobson*, a viable father to this phrase, is included in no less than nine idiom compilations; thus, derivation is

touched upon only in cases where some other Hobson is suggested as the origin, or, consequently, where the background history differs from the one above. As no dating connected to him is offered by the OED, all such data is studied below. In Brewer, Mr *Thomas* Hobson's death is dated to 1630. In ChambId he is delineated and dated together as a '17th century Cambridge livery-stable keeper'. As in the OED, also in CollId the origin is referred to **Steele's account in *The Spectator No.509*** (Oct 14th 1712) about "Tobias Hobson, who kept an inn at Cambridge and hired out horses, always insisting that the one nearest to the stable doors be taken, though he had a large number of them". Thus, Steele says, it became the proverb, when what ought to be your selection was forced to you, to say '*Hobson's choice*'. The data of Hobson's death in 1631 is by CollId referred to The Dictionary of National Biography. In OxfId this term is ascribed to a 17th century carrier, who refused a free choice of horses, hiring out each in "its proper turn". His death is dated to 1630 also by Funk, and the reason for his odd customer policy clarified: "Wanting to save his best (and most demanded) horses from (occasionally) violent riders, he made a rule that no horse be hired except in its proper turn". Also in Hunt, his death is dated to 1630. In LongId no date is provided, while he is dated to the late 16th (!) century in M&M, with an explanatory note on his procedure: devoted to the welfare of his horses, Mr Hobson established a firm rule

that each customer in turn must take the horse nearest the stable door with no picking or choosing tolerated. Also the case of *Richmond Pearson Hobson* is discussed, the person who sank the collier *Merrimac* in an attempt to bottle up the Spanish fleet in Santiago Harbour in 1898; with the conclusion, however, that that origins of the phrase lie in Cambridge, not in Santiago. In R&S, the background story is provided without any dates. **COMMENT:** Despite negligible variance in his first name and date of death, the case seems self-explanatory. Which source has been borrowed data by which other, copying the dates and rephrasing the account, is, of course, another thing. As concerns temporal accounts, the most likely source will be Brewer. The lack of OED data on Mr Hobson's identity - its transfer of the task to the reader via a reference to Mr Steele finds little justification against all the data detailed in all the sources above. The superior strength of these nine contenders against the OED does not, of course, settle the argument as to which approach is right; it only makes it evident that the view they hold in common as the most plausible also seems more likely to the student of their renditions. S3/D2

48. Lynch/lynch law; lynching: the practice of inflicting a summary punishment upon an offender by a self-constituted court without legal authority.

This term is paralleled in Brewer with *mob-law*', with two alternative origins offered: *James Lynch* of Ireland, (15th C.), or from *Charles Lynch* of Virginia (1736-1796), with a note of neither origin's substantiation. The two derivations listed in the OED are also provided in Hunt: *Charles Lynch*, or from *Lynch Creek*, supporting them with the same data, dates included. This idiom is paralleled in R&S with "execution by an unauthorized and self-appointed body; 'mob justice'". Its original use is pinned down to 1817, yet with a denial of its successful tracks back to any person called Lynch. Even with such a candidate found, for example Charles Lynch of Virginia (1736-96), he is never found involved with what is meant by *Lynch law*. Another suggestion is through an English dialectal verb 'to *linch*', recorded with the meaning 'to beat', 'to handle roughly'; with no closer dating suggested. **COMMENT:** There is strong evidence that the OED account is recapitulated by Hunt, without stating this. In R&S, in turn, fairly far-fetched derivations are put forth about some ancient English dialectal variants, suggesting this branch as a special field of interest for either author; these may work as 'optional extras' - at times even entertaining ones - yet even more frequently less verifiable than the more ordinary suggestions from historical persons or locations, which often may be supported with some verified data, at least. S3/D3

49.Murphy's law: (an originally American) humorous term for apparent perverseness and unreasonableness of things.

"What can go wrong, will go wrong" is its briefest form (also: '**Sod's Law**') also preferred in R&S, and track down to an American origin - first heard by Alan Smith in 1977 in the TV disaster film '*Pile up on Highway 14*'. **COMMENT**: Naturally, its 'invasion' of Britain is discussed by this team, some twenty years later than the dates quoted by the OED. Thus it appears the most recent of the idioms among this 'Top Hundred', if the claim by Alan Smith about its landing on the British soil is valid. Its earliest use in America is evidenced by the OED as of 1958. S3/D3

50.Parkinson's law: "Work expands to fill the time available for its completion.

This 'law' is summed up in Brewer as follows: 'The amount of work done is in inverse proportion to the number of people employed'. His derives and dates it correctly: an eponymous satire (1957) by *Northcote Parkinson*, directed at public administration, and ineffective business administration.

According to R&S: "Work expands to fill the time available for its completion" with a corollary, "Subordinates multiply at a fixed rate regardless of the amount of work produced".

This phrasing is a reiteration of that in the OED, and the derivation one of that in Brewer, yet with 1958 as the book's publishing year. **COMMENT**: The dating in both sources is, in

fact, correct: Brewer's figure stands for the year this 'law' was introduced in American press (it had been publicized in 1955 in the British press), while the date by R&S represents for the publication of its U.K. edition. All this data is proffered by the OED. S3/D3

51.like billy-o(h)/Billyo/Billio: (intensively for) like the devil!

All essential details are catered by Brewer, and Brewer alone: definition 'with great enthusiasm', and derivation from any of the three suggested origins. First from *Joseph Billio* (c.1700), a British rector noted for his energy and enthusiasm; second from *Nino Biglio*, one of Garibaldi's lieutenants, who used to dash into action shouting: "I am Biglio! Follow me, you rascals, and fight like Biglio!"; or thirdly from '*Puffing like Billy-o*', a simile arisen from George Stevenson's '*Puffing Billy*' (a locomotive). No closer dating for the latter two. The form indicated in the OED is also followed in OxfId (like **billy-o(h)**), an informal expression for 'vigorously; successfully', as in '*to sell like billy-o*'. Oddly, no derivation is given. '*Like billio*' is the preferred form in R&S, now with a substantial and detailed derivation: from Joseph Billio, a Puritan divine, who founded the Independent Congregation at Maldon, Essex in 1682. **COMMENT**: Apparently this is the personage referred to as 'rector' by Brewer; equally apparently the most viable and

sensible among the three suggested origins as well. The contest remains unsettled until crucial data is presented on the authenticity of each etymology. No data is provided in the OED to support any of these candidates; equally well any of the three might be suggested by the OED quotes (1885 and 1914). S3/D2

52.according to Cocker: in accordance with strict rule or calculation; strictly, exactly.

The OED data is 'in strict accordance' reiterated in Brewer: from *Edward Cocker's* (1631-1675) Arithmetick, a textbook on arithmetic which ran through over a hundred editions; and its American counterpart *according to Gunter*, which also has British origins. Hunt's variant is 'according to the rules'; in its derivation Cocker's life period is dated as 1631-1672; furthermore, a note in it adds that the phrase was much popularized by The Apprentice, a successful farce produced in 1756, also listed in the OED (yet not containing this phrase). *According to Gunter* is given as a parallel American saying. The derivation in R&S is in accordance with those in Brewer and Hunt, yet with a failure to date him or his textbook; *According to Gunter* mentioned as well. **COMMENT:** The derivation of all three compilations are in strict accordance with the OED, whether from his textbook or from himself is not relevant here; what seems somewhat surprising is that in some sources, here Hunt in particular, little attention is

paid to checking the relevant background data, which would be a matter of course. S3/D3

53.according to Gunter: in accordance with strict rule; strictly, exactly.

The derivation in Brewer is in agreement with the OED data; from *Edmund Gunter* (1581-1626), a noted English mathematician; with a note adding that though British in origin, this saying was adopted by Americans to correspond the British phrase '*according to Cocker*'. All this data is also reproduced in Hunt and R&S ('correct; just as it ought to be'). **COMMENT**: A case of unarguable unanimity. S3/D3

54.according to Hoyle: according to the highest authority or to strict rules.

The reader is referred by Brewer to Hoyle's work A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist (1742), which remained the standard authority on the game for many years. "Until the publication of Principles of Whist (1862) by "Cavendish" (Henry Jones)", runs the completion by Funk, with a note that Hoyle (d.1769) once more became authoritative when Foster's Hoyle was published by Robert Foster, another specialist on card games, in 1897. It is deemed 'proverbially synonymous to correctness' in the estimate of Hunt, and derived as in the OED. 'In accordance with the rules of the game' is the definition in M&M; with similar facts as above. **COMMENT**:

Again, plain facts are readily available in the typical idiom compilation, whenever they are readily consultable in the typical work of reference. S3/D3

55.A1/A-1/A-one (at Lloyd's): prime, first-class.

The origin of this idiom relates in Brewer with '*Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping*', where A1 is a mark of first class; the letter standing for the state of the ship's hull, and the figure for that of the anchors, cables the like. The first letter and number are representative to CollId as denoting a first-class ship in Lloyd's Register.

Labelled 'colloquial, rather old-fashioned' this phrase is derived in LongId from the Lloyd's of London providing insurances for ships and recording them in an official list, where the ships in best condition are described as A1.

According to R&S, this phrase originates from the usage in '*Lloyd's Register of Shipping*' where the quality of a ship's hull is denoted by letters and of its fittings by numbers; A1 standing for "the best and most reliable quality throughout".

COMMENT: Definition and derivation by all sources is accurate and apt, furnishing also excellent background data. What one is left to desire for is an idea as to when the idiom became established - none of the several idiom compilations here ventures a conjecture - a date for Lloyd's or its Register's establishment would turn out helpful as a rough reference; the year 1937 is put down in the OED for its first quote.

Since this kind of detective work poses unreasonable demands on the average student of idioms, all compilations are, in this respect, 'weighed and found wanting'. Incidentally, when the birth date of this company was under research, an interesting piece of news was found in the detailed exposition by Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary (1989), namely that the company (originally an association of marine insurance underwriters founded c.1688) owes its name to a Mr *Edward Lloyd*, owner of a London coffee house, at the time frequented by members of this association. S2/D3

56.to do/pull a brodie: - (not listed in the OED).

Mr Brodie is related by Brewer to a daring youngster, who, having jumped off Brooklyn Bridge on 23 July, 1886 to win a bet of \$200, "would take a dare". Despite Brewer's failure to record when the actual phrase gained currency, it is worthy of praise for its background essentials. In Funk's view this Americanism means: to take a (daring) chance (in sports) and fail; to blunder; to be defeated ignominiously (in theatrical world). The reader is related to *Steve Brodie* (b.1863), who on a bet jumped from Brooklyn Bridge (1886) and was arrested for endangering his life and read a bitter lecture by the judge in court. Later, however, no one could be found to testify this jump, or any of other similar ones he allegedly had made from several other bridges. In the course of a few decades this brought his name into shame and contempt. In R&S

'to attempt suicide' is boldly suggested; derived likewise from Steve Brodie who jumped off Brooklyn Bridge over the East River and survived. Some supplement is provided: Encouraged by the fame of this feat Brodie later opened a Bowery saloon; later to be portrayed in a gangster film titled 'Bowery' (1933). **COMMENT:** whether a proof of bravado or sheer tomfoolery, Brodie got his name in the English proper name idioms. What strikes the idiom student as somewhat more surprising is the lack of this entry in the OED. S3/D-

57.to be in Burke: to be in a dictionary of the British aristocracy.

The source to this verbal idiom is quoted by Brewer as Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage - a recognized authority on Britain's titled classes since 1826. The phrase is paralleled to '*to be in Debrett*' (another work listing British aristocracy), as - incidentally - in the OED too, though only in passing, in its quotes. The source is by Hunt preferred in the colloquial form 'Burke's Peerage', dated to the said year, and the author to 1787-1848. **COMMENT:** This account of essentials in exactly the same form and order in Hunt as the in OED will arise certain assumptions about its spokespersonship for OED information. S3/D2

58. to keep up with the Joneses: to strive not to be outdone by one's neighbours or social equals.

According to Brewer the origin to this saying is in *Arthur "Pop" Momand*, a comic-strip artist for a series in the New York Globe beginning in 1913, originally based on his own efforts to keep up with his neighbours. This data (artist, magazine, year) is publicized in ChambId, too, while that in LongId is rather scanty: a definition without derivation. An eponymous comic strip is, in M&M, related to A.R. Momand, first released in 1913. **COMMENT**: All this data is also catered by the OED, the first quotes also coinciding with it (1913 and 1926). What remains odd in its exposition is, invariably, that no equal marks are put between the idiom and its authenticated father (here its first quote, where all the relevant details are brought forth). S3/D3

59. Kilroy was here: (an originally American) phrase for a mythical person seen written on the walls and the like all over the world.

The Air Transport Command among the American troops are specified by Brewer as carriers for this phrase around the world during WW II; with *James Kilroy* offered as the originator. In R&S, this is a 'writing as a kind of ironic memorial to someone's presence at a place'; this personage is seen as good an alternative as any among the many suggested.

COMMENT: Under these circumstances it is, of course,

difficult to disclose which source has been copied data by which, as the unanimity here is unusually strong - and not without a reason: the suggested background story is plausible, although the sensibility of an alternative is not necessarily correlated to its authenticity. S3/D3

60.to put on the ritz: to assume the air of superiority.

'Ritzy' and '*to dine at the Ritz*' are the phrasings preferred in Brewer, with definitions accurate enough to illustrate '*putting on the ritz*', derived from the Swiss hotelier, César Ritz, who established his Ritz in Piccadilly of London in 1906. A colloquialism for giving oneself airs, is the depiction in LongId, with derivations from the Ritz hotels, a group of expensive fashionable hotels; without any dates, however, to suggest established use. **COMMENT:** Although a clue is provided in Brewer as to when the phrase might have originated, its account is vastly improved by that in the OED: the lifetime of Mr Ritz (1850-1926), the first quote (1926), rounded with the introductory lines of the eponymous song by Irving Berlin (1929). Hence the phrase may have gained some currency even prior to the first performance or release of the song, and the latter will have certainly made it more popular. As remembered, this song enjoyed a new wave of popularity during the 1980s, becoming also nationally popular in its Finnish interpretation. S2/D3

61.What will Mrs Grundy say? : a phrase expressing fear for social disapproval of in matters of conventional propriety. The same source and date are furnished by all sources - the phrase being a direct quote from To Speed the Plough by Tom Morton (1798) - only defining with shades of difference in defining the statement. In Brewer: one's worry for one's self-righteous neighbour's attitude; in CollId: a personification of the conventional dictates of British propriety, especially prudery; In OxfId: one of a narrow, disapproving and censorious attitude, with the authors life period: (1764-1838). Hunt: a 'personification of local opinion and respectability, especially of the Victorian age; strangely, the date is put as 1800! LongId: (derogatory for) a person who disapproves of people whose behaviour is not in accordance with customary morals, e.g. with regard to sex; also 'Grundyism', a view of too strict moral correctness, is added. Noble: a 'symbol of social convention; a censorious person, an upholder of morals'. R&S: a symbol of a narrow-minded propriety. Here is to be found complementary data for the diverse timing by Hunt: this comedy was first produced at Covent Garden Theatre in 1800. **COMMENT**: All sources display unusual unanimity - a model example of properly verified source information. S3/D3

62.when Miss/Mr Right comes along: when one meets one's destined spouse.

This phrase is merely stated in ChambId, while in OxfId it is seen as an 'informal or facetious for meeting the ideal or entirely suitable person for one to marry'; also in the form of '*when one meets Miss/Mr Right*'. No attempt towards dating is made in either. Neither is it in LongId, in which Mr Right is colloquial for 'the imagined man who will fulfill a woman's all desires and needs as a husband'. **COMMENT:** On occasion, it may prove difficult to trace down even an approximate birth for a phrase, however frequent in modern usage, especially when the idiom is not a by-product of a literary work, speech of a politician, blurt out of an actress, or statement of a public figure or celebrity. It could, hence, be seen as a 'common coinage' where anyone might claim its parenthood. S2/D2

63.to gerrymander: (American phrase) to rearrange electional districts in order to allow a certain political party a greater representation than on a fair system.

The same background developments as in the OED are provided by Brewer, leading to Mr *Elbridge Gerry*, Governor of Massachusetts. In Hunt the governor's role is emphasized: it was he, and not the editor of The Continent, who exclaimed the immortal phrase: 'Gerrymander!', thus emerging the coiner, not only the model for coinage, as in other sources. With the exclusion of the actual 'founding father', the derivational data in M&M is in agreement with the OED and

Brewer, without a closer dating, however. In R&S, the authentication of the newspaperman (1744-1814) is preferred.

COMMENT: Whichever of the two uttered first this phrase, it nevertheless remains the literary inheritance from the astute governor to posterity. S3/D3

64.to ride Shank's/Shanks's mare/pony: to use one's own legs as a means of conveyance.

In Brewer this idiom is simply a variant of 'to walk', derived through pun, as in the OED; with some other variants: '*to go by Walker's bus*'; and '*to go by Marrow-bone coach/stage*'. No dating of established use ventured, however. ChambId's derivation is as above, without a date. In CollId some 'addenda' are brought up: the phrase is sometimes implying that there is no opportunity to, or one cannot afford, other transportation. Nowadays established as 'Shanks's or Shank's mare', earlier also 'nag' and 'pony' were used. With obvious derivation, also the first quote by the OED is cited in CollId: Robert Fergusson, a Scottish poet (1750-1774): 'And auld shanks-naig wad tire/I dread, to pace to Berwick.' The reader is further referred to The Oxford Book of English Proverbs as having recorded the earliest use of 'mare' in this phrase by Samuel Bishop in 1795. OxfId is far from capable of CollId's feat: a mere definition. A fresh view, instead, is suggested in Funk: possibly from a playful allusion to a **Mr Shank** who had no other means of conveyance,

but more likely an invention of Scottish wit, 'shank' being the part of the leg below the knee. In LongId it is regarded old-fashioned for walking, as 'shank' is old-fashioned for 'leg'; and the phrase humorous for one's legs as if they were owners of a horse used for riding. No dating suggested. In M&M the derivation alternates from reference to a person's legs, also known as 'shanks'; with 'mare', perhaps because mares generally are more slow-paced than stallions, their pace thus having more resemblance to walking - again with no dating to crown this worthy account. The briefest account is provided in Noble: walking, using one's shanks; derived via obvious pun, no dating. In R&S the term is classified humorous for walking, derived as in the other sources, yet with some synonyms: 'Paddy's mare' and '*Walker's bus*'. No estimate of dating ventured. **COMMENT:** This idiom appears similar to '*Miss/Mr Right*', or to '*the Civvy Street*' in that an appellative has become 'individualized': to stand for an individual represented by a proper name and thus to function like one. Due to the more indefinite, unorganized nature of an appellative (as compared to that of a proper name) it is also less easily traceable to any particular person who may have invented or originated it. These and other connected features are more closely discussed in Section VII. S2/D2

65.to lead the life of Reilly/Riley: to enjoy a comfortable and carefree existence.

In Brewer Mr Reilly lives 'luxuriously', derived from a comic song 'Is That Mr.Reilly' by Pat Rooney, popular in the 1880s, describing what the hero would do if he "struck it rich". To ChambId this is slang (!) for 'an easy, trouble-free life'; with no certifiable origin. According to OxfId one is having or enjoying temporarily an easy, carefree, pampered or luxurious life; without suggested derivation. Brewer is echoed in Funk: living 'luxuriously', and its derivation is a duplicate from Brewer. No such is given in LongId; Mr Reilly merely leads a comfortable and happy life. In R&S preference is on a life of irresponsible ease and pleasure. With no certain origin to present, a reference is suggested to the stereotyped figure of **the feckless Irishman** (Riley being a common Irish surname). No dates proposed. **COMMENT:** None of the quoted accounts is acceptable to the OED editorship - this appears somewhat odd, since in Brewer, for instance, actual lyrics are quoted from an actual, obviously verifiable work, with both the songwriter and its period of popularity stated. The weight of Brewer's evidence is not accentuated by Funk, even if he possibly refers the very facts related by Brewer - without admitting this, however. Why the plagiarism should have worked this way is obvious from the order of their respective works chronologically (the original Brewer came out in 1870). S3/D2

66. (All) my eye (and Betty Martin): (expression of emphatic denial) That's nonsense!

'All that's nonsense' to Brewer, with derivation uncertain: one common explanation is that this was a British soldiers' or sailors' rendering of "*O mihi, beate Martine*", an invocation to St. Martin heard abroad - "all my eye" being a common saying of older origin; yet not dated here. Nonsense is it also in CollId, or a matter of contemptuous disbelief, dating back to the mid-18th century, yet of unknown origin; possibly referring to the tears of a person affecting emotion he doesn't feel: the tears are in his eye, but not from his heart. The proper name version is a later form; according to Joe Miller, the famous 18th century comedian, a corruption of '*O mihi, beate Martine*', meaning '*O grant me aid, blessed St. Martin*', in the ears of a British sailor visiting a foreign church. To OxfId this is (an informal phrase for) completely untrue or nonsensical, especially of something that is intended to deceive or mislead one but does not do so. No derivation is given. Colloquial, old-fashioned it is also in the estimate of LongId for something not to be believed; i.e. foolish, untrue, or meaningless. Also shortened to '*(That's) all my eye!*'. No derivation, either. In R&S 'that's no more than nonsense' is provided with traditional derivation from a British sailor's version of words heard in Italian church, '*Ah mihi, beate Martini*', meaning '*Ah grant me, blessed St Martin*'. No dating

furnished. **COMMENT:** For information presented in these idiom compilations, Brewer appears to be the source (the earliest of these works), which becomes apparent by the similar versions of background data. S2/D2

67.Joe Miller: a jest or joke, especially a 'stale' one (i.e. 'chestnut').

A 'stale jest' is agreed by Brewer as well as the fact that its staleness was due to the compilation, Joe Miller's Jest Book in 1739, published by John Mottley - not to *Joseph Miller* (1684-1738), the comedian himself - who, on top of that, was an analphabetic. These facts are also agreed upon in Hunt, again with some elements that make up a myth: this favourite comic actor at Drury Lane theatre was off the stage never heard to utter a joke; yet the other wits used to ascribe every new joke to him. The collection published soon after his death won immense popularity, and was followed by a mass of fraudulent imitations, under his name, of course. It was - according to Hunt - from this original set that every would-be wisecrack took his pick, and thus the original 'Joe Millers' were constantly repeated until they grew stale. These developments are condensed in Noble: first, a joke (a **joe**); then a worn-out joke, a 'chestnut'. In R&S version, this was the name called out, especially among theatrical people, at the recognition of an old familiar joke. The derivation and dating in all compilations are in accord with

the OED. **COMMENT:** Another clear case of an idiom derived from a historical character, leaving little room for variations, unless in the background 'nuances' linked with his person.

S3/D3

68.John Bull: the typical Englishman or the English nation personified.

Admittedly, Dr. John Arbuthnot (d.1735) is, in Brewer's view, **claimed** the one who established the phrase, but not the one who invented it. The same author and work are recorded in CollId, without other claims than that the phrase came to general use only some sixty years later. G.B. Shaw (1856-1950) and his play John Bull's Island are offered in OxfId as reference. The above data by Brewer and CollId (author, work, date) is recapitulated in Hunt, while Mr Bull's character is enlarged upon in Noble: it being 'either beloved or ridiculed by writers and cartoonists for his solidity (in mind and appearance), ruggedness and commonsense - sometimes arrogance: usually depicted as an 18th century gentleman (*when he made his first appearance*) or an early 19th century country gentleman in riding jacket and top boots, bluff and well-fed. Its derivation is in line with Brewer, CollId, and Hunt, yet 'with a grain of salt': popularised by John Arbuthnot in his pamphlets, *possibly inspired by the organist and composer John Bull* (1563-1628) who is credited with the first composition of the national anthem. Not much more is to

be extracted from R&S: definition, author, work and its publication year. **COMMENT:** In the OED, Arbuthnot's work (1712) is given as its first quote: hence, if he was not the father to this idiom, his work was likely to help it become current, much like Shaw's work some 200 years later. S3/D3

69.John Doe and Richard Roe: the fictitious plaintiff and defendant in English and U.S. law; hence the ordinary citizen.

According to Brewer, these sham names were abolished by law in 1852; similar others for legal action were John o'Nokes, John-a-Styles, and Tom Styles. This legal invention of the 19th century is recognized in Noble as a fictitious name for a plaintiff, with a similarly fictitious defendant by the name of Richard Roe; John Noakes also given. In R&S John Doe is seen as the ordinary American, "likely to be blamed for everything", derived from the fictitious name used in American legal proceedings for the discovery or the person guilty of an offence. No dating is furnished, however.

COMMENT: All other idiom compilations are here overshadowed by Brewer by its detailed account completed with appropriate dating; the facts brought forth in it seem to be reiterated in the rest. S3/D3

70.John Hancock: a signature.

A plunge straight into the facts seems to be a feat typical of Brewer; so here too: "The gentleman by this name was *the first to sign the Declaration of Independence; he drew it in an especially large and clear hand*". The same episode is catered in M&M: John Hancock of Massachusetts signed the Declaration of Independence in such a large and bold hand that it completely overshadowed the other autographs. In R&S, some finishing touches of its own are sought after: this Boston merchant and revolutionary patriot put an especially large first signature to the Declaration of Independence, "so the King of England could read it without spectacles". The original incident is so unanimously echoed in all the three compilations as to arouse doubts of the other two deriving from the older Brewer edition; this, of course, being the most thorough and detailed source of information among the three. **COMMENT:** One cannot help wondering why it is not even touched in the OED: the other three works swear to this gentleman's name, and there are none substituted for him, not even in the OED. None of the compilers here venture an estimate as to when this phrase became current; this ignorance is little helped by the first OED quotes, from 1846 and 1903. S3/D2

71. mumbo jumbo: an object of unintelligent veneration; hence meaningless talk or writing, nonsense.

A name given by Europeans - possibly through some lost native word - to a *grotesque idol venerated by certain African tribes* is also the derivational origin in Brewer. This term occurs in Mungo Park's Travels in the Interior of Africa (1795-7), where it is explained to be "a strange bugbear much employed to by the pagan natives in keeping their wives in subjection". The derivation in R&S is also from the writings of Mungo Park, the explorer of Niger, for a *fictitious god or spirit*, actually impersonated by a disguised native, whose terrible visitations and chastisements were used by the men of a village to keep their women in subjection. No dating is offered in the latter work. **COMMENT:** If present in writing, whether by Moore or Park, or any other source, it has, by both accounts, been born and, at some later date, gained popularity. Though not found in the language area proposed, it may have happened as is suggested in Brewer: it was lost from the language, even if for reasons as simple as taboo for everyday usage or for any foreign ears present. Whatever the case, the term itself is in detail described and annotated in the OED; no other source comes up to its account here. The first two quotes of the literal sense are received from these very authors, Moore (1738) and Park (1799), and in the transferred sense, 1847 and 1876, suggesting general use possibly from the early 19th century (in the latter, more modern, meaning). S3/D3

72.namby-pamby: a person weakly sentimental or insipidly pretty or childishly simple.

The origin is agreed upon in all the sources: *Ambrose Philips*, with some (Brewer, Funk, Hunt, Noble, and R&S) prepared to cite his death date (1749) as a rough clue to the birth of this phrase. Oddly enough, in CollId this date is given as 1744, while the actual originator to this derisive appellation, *Henry Carey* is named by all these works. In some (Brewer, Funk, and Hunt) even the occasion is stated that raised Cain in Carey to the above effect: Philips the poet's sentimental verses addressed to 'the infant daughter of Lord Carteret' - also accounting for Carey's coinage in 'infantile' language: a baby would approximate 'Ambrose' as 'Namby' and rhyme it with 'Pamby', with a P in alliteration with 'Philips'. This point is dwelled upon in all definitions, if slightly differently. Brewer: wishy-washy, insipid, *weakly sentimental* (especially of authors). CollId: weakly sentimental (people or action), insipidly pretty (style), also used as a noun. Funk: *sickly sentimental*, insipid. Hunt: wishy-washy, insipid, *offensively sentimental*. Noble: a delicate, protected, *insipidly sentimental* person. R&S: (derisively for) weakly sentimental, insipidly pretty, affectedly simple. **COMMENT**: Yet another case of unambiguous etymology: a literary and historically verifiable figure fathering an idiom, even if coined by another person. S3/D3

73. Paul Pry: a very inquisitive person.

This rough sketch is completed with individual emphasizing in each compilation: an idle meddlesome fellow, who has no occupation of his own and is always interfering with other people's affairs (Brewer). Its derivation is totally different from the OED's: from the main character in Paul Pry (1825), a comedy by John Poole. One who is habitually inquisitive about and meddles in his neighbours' private affairs (CollId); its derivation in accordance with Brewer: from the chief character in a comedy by John Poole (1825). "A meddlesome and inquisitive person, who is not necessarily malicious" (OxfId), synonymous to a 'Nosey Parker'. Also traced back to Paul Pry by John Poole (1786-1872). A meddlesome, inquisitive fellow; a less plebeian counterpart of 'Nosey Parker' (Hunt), with a reference to a Mr Thomas Hill, a journalist, who is believed to have been the model for John Poole (1786-1872) to build his farce upon (1825). "An inquisitive, meddlesome, interfering kind of person" (Noble); also referring this character to Poole's (1785-1872) eponymous comedy. Not surprisingly, this 'nosey person' is derived also in R&S from the eponymous comedy (1825) by John Poole, where Pry always made his entry with the words 'I hope I don't interrupt'. **COMMENT:** Challenged by six sources, an American song of 1820 is persisted by the OED, a song it is unable to verify; it precedes the unanimously quoted British origin by five years, but that does not explain away the

latter's predominance by this time difference - even less, with its first quote in 1829. With no evidence to substantiate its claim with, this author finds it wanting and instead supports the interpretation proffered in all these sources. S3/D2

74.Pooh Bah: a person holding many offices at the same time; a self-important person.

To this scene a frequent motive is added in Brewer: one of self-interest; giving this character another epithet '*The Lord High Everything Else*' in The Mikado, or The Town of Tipitu, a light opera by Gilbert and Sullivan; yet with all dates ignored. Brewer's footsteps are reiterated in Hunt, as well as its derivation, almost word for word: from the eponymous character, nominated as 'the Lord Everything Else' in The Mikado, or The Town of Tipitu, a famous opera by Gilbert and Sullivan, first produced in 1885. An officious dignitary, or one holding many offices is the designation preferred in Noble; with derivation as above. **COMMENT:** Surprisingly, it is only in Hunt - in close agreement with Brewer - where any dating is furnished at all. Possibly, data such as this is regarded as superfluous to the general British readership. S3/D3

75.Rip van Winkle: a person unfamiliar with the prevailing conditions.

Derivations by all the three compilations are from Washington Irving's Sketch Book, with dates in Brewer and Hunt for both the author and his work, while in OxfId all is kept to the minimum: his twenty-year sleep. In the first two works the definitions are nicely completed with background data: this character is seen in Brewer as one after a long sleep finding everything thoroughly changed. Rambling on the Catskill Mountains this henpecked husband meets odd people in old Flemish dresses playing ninepins, takes a draught of their drink and falls asleep to wake apparently some twenty years later and find his world changed: wife dead, daughter married, village altered, America independent. In OxfId he is pictured as a person unaware or only recently conscious of changes in himself and others, general circumstances or world affairs. Another detailed account of the subject is given in Hunt: driven from home by his wife, Rip wanders in the Catskill Mountains and meets strange people; taking some of their drink he falls to sleep for twenty years and awakes to find his world changed: his wife dead, daughter married, village altered, and America independent. **COMMENT:** In OxfId preference is given to modern conciseness: one though, one clause-style, while such a close likeness in formulation is revealed between the former two as to force the thought of plagiarism; once again, on chronological grounds, the recipient is to be regarded as Hunt. On account of its theft,

Hunt is here, besides Brewer, to be acknowledged as the best source of clear and well-grounded information. S3/D3

76.Tommy Atkins: a typical British private soldier.

In all source compilations this character is seen as 'one of the rank and file'. The most solid account is rendered in Brewer: a private soldier in the British army, this name being used from 1815 onwards in the specimen form accompanying the official manual issued to all army recruits, to show how the form should be filled in. His naval companion carried the name '*Jack Tar*'. In CollId the reader is explicitly referred to Brewer as the origin, with the label 'almost obsolete since the introduction of National Service'; an opinion shared in OxfId, now with the label 'dated slang', and a crude dating to the 19th century, yet specified with a quote of 1914. Its further development into '*tommy*' is also given in both compilations. Any data beyond the literary is failed in Hunt: Kipling is mentioned (undated) as having used the name for the typical soldier. In Noble Mr Atkins is formulated in rather vague terms: the '*other ranks*' in the British army, with regret for the inability to credit it to anyone, and with a mention of Tommy's naval cousin '*Jack Tar*'. Almost as to make up for this failure, a quote is produced from Kipling's Barrack Room Ballads with dating (1892). The data in the OED and Brewer is echoed in R&S, yet with a statement of the source as the *Soldier's Account Book*

of 1815 showing the name '**Thomas Atkins**'. With a copy given to every soldier '*Tommy*' came to stand for the average soldier as *G I Joe* in the United States. **COMMENT:** In general terms, the background is known to all sources: any differences there may exist appear in other details such as dates: the 19th century (OxfId), 1892 (Noble) or 1914 (OxfId). It is useful and educating to have any dating at all; yet with dating as varied as these the reader may be chronologically misplaced by decades. And that does not make a very attractive advertisement for their general dependability in terms of dates. A helping hand is lent by the OED: its first quotes (under 'Thomas Atkins') from 1815 and 1837 are directly taken from official forms. Their first 'non-governmental' citation is also from Kipling (From Sea to Sea, 1888) showing, nevertheless, that this private had made his name widely known in some 70 years, appearing in the quote familiarly and simply as '*Tommy*'. S3/D3

77.Walter Mitty: a person indulging in daydreaming.

In ChambId this 'derogatory' term is derived from Mr Thurber, without a date, while in OxfId he is also tracked down to Mr James Thurber, now with a date (1894-1961), and note of the original (The Secret Life of Walter Mitty). This data is also furnished by LongId, derived as above, and also in R&S, deplorably, all dates ignored. **COMMENT:** A case of verifiably literary history yielding unanimous data. S3/D3

78. (sweet) Fanny Adams: (originally) tinned meat; hence later 'nothing at all'.

In Brewer this idiom equals 'nothing at all; sweet nothing', with an illustrative account: in 1867 a Fanny Adams, a girl of eight, was murdered, with her body ghastly dismembered. With gruesome humour, her name was adopted by the Royal Navy as synonymous for tinned mutton - first issued at the time. Consequently the phrase became to mean anything worthless, and then 'nothing at all'. Also in form '*Sweet F.A.*'/'*sweet f.a.*'. The modern, derived, sense is propagated in OxfId: 'nothing of much value or importance', with an account almost identical to the above, derived from sailors' slang to modern colloquialism, with dating rounded to the 19th century. Also the shortened form is added in LongId to this 'euphemistic' term '*(sweet) F.A.*', or even '*(sweet) effay*'; with the connotation of a taboo term ('fuck all') also found in the OED, without any dating, however. This, among all essentials, is carefully covered in R&S, which traces her cruel murder to **1810**, and refers to the remnants of her body as being thrown into the river at Alton, Hampshire. From this watery location is pictured a connection to *the Royal Navy, who, with their grim humour, began calling their meat rations 'Fanny Adams'*. Earlier, in cockney rhyming slang, 'nothing at all' had been turned into 'fuck all', abbreviated to F.A. After the incident it became re-expanded into *(sweet) Fanny Adams*; '**sweet**'

in accordance with Italian '**dolce** far niente', 'sweet idleness', on account of the pleasure of doing nothing at all. No dating for the latter addition is ventured - indeed that would seem gilding the lily, with all the excellent background data provided. **COMMENT:** Excepting R&S, the three other compilations agree in derivation and dating, also with the OED. This makes the R&S commentary (by dating, in particular) now seem rather peculiar, especially against the first quotes provided by the OED, namely of 1889 and 1927 in the literal sense, and of 1919 and 1930 in the figurative one. S3/D3

79. the real Simon Pure: the genuine person or thing. In only Brewer and Noble is this character awarded the connotation of a 'hypocrite making a great parade of his virtue'; in all the rest he is treated as the 'real person or thing'. Also oddly, the origin, A Bold Stroke for a Wife, a comedy by Susannah Centilivre, is dated in Brewer to 1718 - a year after the data verified by the OED, for instance. As if to make up for this lapse, some flesh is provided by it to the bones set up by the OED: a Colonel Feignwell wins the heart of Miss Lovely under the name of Simon Pure, a Quaker of note; the latter then turns up and proves beyond doubt that he is the 'real Simon Pure'. This personage is equally ably covered in Noble - or even better, in dating both the authoress and her work. Also in CollId is a note of the

authoress' life period (1667-1721), and Mr Pure's stay in America before returning on the scene and proving his identity. The OxfId definition is neat and to the point: 'one who is genuinely what he says he is; one whose conduct and character are faultless', with date in round numbers: the early 18th century. The setting is completed in Funk with more data: Simon Pure, a Pennsylvania Quaker with a letter of introduction to the guardian of an heiress, is deceived of it by Colonel Feignwell. Impersonating the former he marries the heiress, and this fraud is maintained until the appearance of "the real Simon Pure". Hunt's dates are in accord with Brewer's: 1718, with the name of the impostor, however, as Colonel *Fainall*. **COMMENT:** All sources appear well informed of the origin with its plot, and of its author with the respective dating. Well-grounded suspicion of an act of plagiarism is, however, aroused by the similarity of Noble's account with that in Brewer, absent from the other compilations. Nevertheless, to the present author's genuine satisfaction, the sources are in complete agreement on all the essentials (with the negligible deviations in dating ignored). S3/D3

80.Davy Jones's locker: the ocean, especially as the grave of those who perish at sea.

No origins (nor any closer dating) are provided in Brewer, but the mere comment that in the 18th century Davy Jones was

the sailors' term for *the evil spirit of the sea*, with several origins offered: a corruption of the West Indian 'duppy' (devil), a corruption of *Jonah*, or that Davy Jones was a pirate. ChambId's derivation is from the 18th century seamen, who gave this name to the *ruler of the evil spirits of the sea*, while Davy Jones is taken in OxfId as the personification of something like an evil spirit or devil of the sea who delights in drowned men, foundered ships and the like; without any derivation or dating. A mere definition is offered by LongId, and no sure origin is provided by M&M, either, despite a variety of explanatory attempts; its preference among these is Jones as a corruption of *Jonah*, the biblical character swallowed by a whale. Another rendering makes him a pub-keeper at dockside, who stored his ale in a locker greatly feared by seamen, for one reason or another (the swashbuckling seamen of Treasure Island, for instance, give rather conflicting evidence against this claim). The phrase itself, at any rate, has been used by seamen for well over two centuries: in 1751 Tobias Smollett wrote in The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle: 'Davy Jones is the fiend that presides over all the evil spirits of the deep, and is often seen in various shapes, perching among the rigging on the eve of hurricanes, shipwrecks, and other disasters to which seafaring life is exposed'. A corruption of the biblical *Jonah* swallowed by a whale is also the origins preferred in Noble; without any dating. The rendering common to Brewer,

ChambId, and OxfId is also agreed upon in R&S: possibly from **Davy Jones** seen as "the fiend that presides over all the spirits of the deep" (Smollett, d.1771), appearing as such in pantomime. The two first of the other suggestions are identical with those in Brewer: from Jonah of the story in the Bible; Duffy, a West Indian ghost; and they add two more: from *Shonee*, a Celtic sea god; and lastly, perhaps from a vague memory of all of these together. **COMMENT**: Ultimately, in the case of an idiom with several contestants of equally matched foundations for etymology, the task of tracing it down to the most plausible, let alone authentic, origin appears impossible. The dating, however, is supported by the OED quotes, 1751 from Smollett, and 1790 from Dibdin. The former is also included in R&S, but the merits of its synopsis are compromised by its peculiar adoption of a Celtic sea deity, whose name bears no resemblance to this phrase (except for, possibly, with Jones, which would rather have evolved from Jonah). This tendency towards fantastic etymologies is somewhat more generally discussed in the conclusion. S3/D3

81.Tom Tiddler's ground: any place where money or riches are acquired readily.

The OED derivation is recapitulated in the two compilations; from the *eponymous children's game*, where (in the area which Tom Tiddler keeps watch on) the players are "picking up gold

and silver". **COMMENT:** Dates for established use are known in neither compilation, thus overshadowed by the OED on all counts. S2/D3

82.before one/you/I can/could say Jack Robinson: very quickly or suddenly.

Derivations differ. In Brewer the reader is referred to Francis Grose, according to whom it has its birth in a very volatile gentleman of this name who used to pay flying visits to his neighbours, and was no sooner announced than he was off again. For another account Brewer's reference is to Halliwell, who has found it in 'an old play' reading "A warke it ys as easie to be done/as tys to saye *Jacke! robys on.*" In Brewer's view, both of these are invented; the said play, for instance, never having been identified. None the wiser of the origin, we are given the very round dating of the 18th century, supported with the former OED quote, and completed with another: a retort by Sheridan in 1780. ChambId is satisfied with a mere definition; while its use is dated in CollId to the late 18th century; with the name of the above quoted Fanny Burney, and addition of Maria Edgeworth, but no work or date rendered. For the origin of this phrase the reader is guided to Brewer's references: Grose's Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (1785), and Halliwell's Archaic Dictionary (1846), with the conclusion (shared by Brewer) that both accounts lack substantiation. A definition and the

label 'informal' is all furnished in OxfId, while in Funk dating from the late 18th century is also suggested. In LongId it is classified under colloquialisms. As in Brewer and CollId, the saying is referred in M&M to Francis Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (1785) and the said quote - this account, however, regarded as unlikely also in M&M. There is another reference in R&S to Brewer - that is to Mr Grose, once more, now deemed most improbable as origins. Its other version, French, and yet more improbable, is that 'Robinson' (from Robinson Crusoe) was formerly a popular term for a gingham umbrella; when introduced and in vogue, the proud owner, anxious to impress others, would call out to her servant at the slightest excuse '*Jacques, Robinson!*'.

COMMENT: In half of the sources, the reader is referred to Francis Grose's Slang Dictionary, thereby dating the idiom at least to 1785, while in CollId its reference is to Fanny Burney, thus taking it a decade or so earlier (1778), even if no closer date is suggested. Thus its earliest use lies about the mid-18th century, if not earlier. After whom this saying was modelled, remains undiscovered by this data. S2/D1

83.Bronx cheer: a sound of contempt/derision made by blowing through lips.

The sources are much concerned as to how this gesture is used; in OxfId it represents ironic applause, generally in disapproval and intended to be offensive; stating the Bronx,

a district in New York, yet leaving one none the wiser as of the hows and whens. Funk may be awarded a feather to its cap; this gesture is the opposite to a cheer among the *spectators of athletic events in the Bronx region* of New York City, notorious for loud demonstrations of this effect in the 1940s; synonymous to '*get/give the raspberry*' of the 1890s, or its British counterpart, '*to get/give the bird*' of the mid-19th century. **COMMENT:** A Philadelphia lawyer-like ability is shown here by Funk in the coverage of an idiom in all the essentials: the definition, origin and later developments, all neatly dated. On account of its rather 'ad hoc' natured derivations elsewhere, the question remains as to what extent the above data holds critical examination. S3/D2

84.Philadelphia lawyer: a lawyer of great ability; or a shrewd or unscrupulous one.

This idea is further corroborated by the compilers; Funk: an exceptionally astute, even 'shady' person; often occurring in similes, '*as smart/tricky/shrewd as P.l.*' or phrase like: "*It would take a P.l. to figure it out.*" A thorough explanation is provided in it: until 1800 Philadelphia was the seat of the new federal government and the financial centre of the country, thus attracting the best legal brains of the country. These lawyers were forced to constantly sharpen their wits to match those of others, and in due time their practices became less scrupulous, and their fame turned into

notoriety. In other words: the phrase dates back to the 18th century. In R&S this character is seen in a better light, the praise being a testimony of competence of a person; in turn dated to *Andrew Hamilton's defence of J.P. Zenger in 1735*, when the latter was sued by the Governor of New York for criticisms published in Zenger's Weekly Journal. Hamilton, the Philadelphia lawyer, was entirely successful in his classic defence of the freedom of the Press. **COMMENT:**

Reasonable, if unascertained, accounts for the origin are put forth in both compilations, remaining also in harmony with the OED data as to when the idiom came into existence, both of which are from American press, 1788 and 1803. S3/D2

85.the Black Hole of Calcutta: a place of confinement for punishment.

Identical story is rendered in all sources: of the *small prison* in Fort William, Calcutta, India, where in 1756 123 British captives out of 146 in all choke to death. In addition, the dates are in agreement with above, with various statistics provided. The picture is completed by definitions; Brewer: a very stuffy dark place; OxfId: a dark, unpleasantly hot and stuffy building/place with few amenities; LongId: a very hot and uncomfortable place, with no fresh air coming in. The original 'death cell' is preferred in Noble, in keeping with the initial incident. Its measurements, as given in it, read 18 by 15 by 18 feet (6 x 5 x 6 metres), forcing

five persons into an area of one square metre. **COMMENT:** All essentials are covered by each source - to the extent that no reader wishes to make personal acquaintance with similar circumstances. S3/D3

86.the wise men of Gotham: fools; simpletons.

A lengthy derivation is catered in Brewer: the *village of Gotham* in Nottinghamshire was proverbial for the folly of its inhabitants. According to a legend, King John once approached the town intending to set up a hunting lodge there. Having heard of this, the villagers took up some idiotic pursuit at the sight of King's messengers. With these reports he abandoned his intention (and the "wise men" remarked "We ween there are more fools pass through Gotham than remain in it"). A nursery rhyme, and 'Merie Tales of the Mad Men of Gotam', published in the reign of Henry VIII, are quoted. Two derivations are offered in M&M. First, it was a designation applied to New York City by Washington Irving in Salmagundi, a series of satirical pieces published in 1807. Second, the actual origins lie in the village of this name, near Nottingham, England, where, allegedly, King John once made a trip for the purpose of acquiring land for a castle. The shrewd villagers soon realized that this would mean new taxies levied on them, and came up with a solution: when king's outriders neared Gotham they found most of the townspeople running wildly in circles, obviously daft. Equal-

ly obviously this was no place for a royal residence and the king withdrew elsewhere. The townsfolk then remarked: 'More fools pass through Gotham than remain in it'; thus Gotham's fame for 'wise fools' was made. **COMMENT:** In both renditions the eponymous British village is suggested as the origin. This remains unascertained by both compilations, as also in the OED, even if both accounts render the same tale with the same dating. The second instance cited in Brewer is also included among the OED quotes (c.1568). Similarly the quote in M&M is available in the OED. Whether the phrase got its origin in this particular location or elsewhere, cannot be established here, the dating to King John's reign (1167-1216) and the first quotes in the mid-16th century - the first in the OED - it is true, goes back to a century prior, which seems a wide space. S3/D3

87.gone for a burton: (slang of an airman) killed or missing. The origins ascribed to the R.A.F in WW II are admitted into Brewer, according to which a token explanation for a person's absence could be "He has gone for a burton", i.e. for a beer, *Burton-upon-Trent* being famous for its quality ales. The second source is in sea: 'drink' being among seamen first, and airmen afterwards, a colloquial expression for sea ('the Big Drink'). Thirdly, the linking of these two similar ideas emerges in Brewer's view as the most likely explanation for the popularity of the idiom. In ChambId this idiom 'dead,

ruined' is derived from II WW RAF slang for one (literally) gone for a drink of Burton ale, with no closer dating given. The information in CollId is referred to Eric Partridge: "an R.A.F. phrase from WW II, where 'burton' stands for a *bottle of beer* brewed in Burton-on-Trent". In OxfId this adverb phrase is traceable to an originally RAF slang expression for a companion not returned from a flying mission. In LongId its origins lie in a bottle of beer made at Burton-on-Trent - as to how a brew of beer (or ale, rather) came to mean 'absent or dead' is not made clear. The idiom is labelled as euphemism by R&S, deriving from WW II R.A.F. slang, with several origins suggested. First from a 1930s beer advertisement - 'Where's Charlie?' - 'Gone for a burton.' Second from the inflatable '*Berthon*' jackets of the old Royal Flying Corps; and third from the radio proficiency tests held over *Burton's shop* in Blackpool after rigorous training at Olympia. **COMMENT:** Again, it appears an impossible task to conjecture a plausible origin among these; all in all, the idiom appears to have its roots in WW II, or the activities connected; as suggested by the majority and supported by the initial quotes of 1941 and 1943 in the OED. The reference to an ale ad by R&S is among the most likely in the alternatives suggested, yet appearing as an 'ad-hoc' as compared to the dominating hint to a bottle of beer, certainly a hard currency among servicemen; perhaps also drawing a parallel between an ale-sipping airman and his airborne companion as

crashing from their positions; the former off his bar-stool, the latter off his heights - the former by force of 'one too many', the latter by enemy fire. S3/D2

88. (All) shipshape and Bristol fashion: in good order.

This idiom is seen in all source compilations as having its origin in the eponymous port. In Brewer the emphasis is on *Bristol's reputation for efficiency* in the days of sail. ChambId's contribution is a mere definition with the note 'nautical', while in CollId Bristol is stated as once having been the most important port in the kingdom; with a note that the phrase is now obsolete in its original sense and obsolescent in its figurative sense. This is echoed in OxfId: once an important commercial port for sailing-ships, while an allusion is preferred in LongId to a ship on which everything is in good order - Bristol once being the largest port in Britain. **COMMENT:** Excepting ChambId, all derivations are in agreement, referring to Bristol's hey-day as a port, the data in Brewer specifying it to the time of sailing ships, hence suggestive of some time in the 19th century. This is neatly reflected in the first two OED quotes from 1840 and 1867.

S3/D3

89. to talk Billingsgate: to talk foul language.

The derivations in all three sources are in agreement with the OED; yet how *billingsgate* came 'into its own' would be of

interest to find in any of them. According to Brewer the *porters of this market* were famous for their foul and abusive language at least four centuries ago; thus dating the phrase back to c.1570. CollId's cite is from a 17th century play: 'As bad a tongue as any oyster-wife at Billingsgate'. Noble's date for the market itself is 1699, supported with a quote from Vanity Fair by Thackeray. **COMMENT:** Definitions in agreement with one another do not take us to the birth of the phrase - the dating, where given, differs widely: Brewer goes back to at least the late 16th century, Noble to the late 17th to mid-18th century. Whatever the date, the background for it is given, if not tenably accounted for. The view taken in CollId and Noble would find favour with the OED background data: "The 17th century references to the ... abusive language of this market are frequent...", instanced by quotes as of 1672 and 1676, thus postdating Brewer's estimate by a century, and predating the inaugural date given by Noble by some two decades; being, however, in agreement with its earliest use in this source. S3/D3

90.to be in Carey Street: to be bankrupt.

This sense is supported in both Brewer and CollId, with the latter's preference on a milder variant: 'to be in financial difficulties'; and a suggestion that the phrase possibly also lent its contents to another, '*to be in Queer Street*'. Both compilations derive alike: from a London street, formerly the

site of the bankruptcy court, yet failing - also as if by common consent - to date the phrase. **COMMENT:** This problem is somewhat aided by the OED: the first quotes go back to 1922 and 1936. S2/D3

91.to be in Civvy Street: to lead civilian life.

The same origin is accounted for in Brewer, LongId, and OxfId, while it is ignored in R&S. Dating is attempted by none of these - not even with a note as of if the term is a product of the first or second World War. **COMMENT:** The OED data is also ambiguous in that the first quotes go back to WWI (1915 and 1919) but refer to 'civvy suit' and 'civvy life', while the ones incorporating 'civvy street' date to WWII or afterwards (1943 and 1959). Thus, the latter designation might be a later development from the former. S2/D3

92.to send (a person) to Coventry: to exclude one from society by refusing to associate with one.

In Brewer's claim, the citizens of Coventry allegedly had once so great a dislike of soldiers that a woman seen speaking to one was instantly tabooed; hence when a soldier was sent to Coventry he was *cut off from all social intercourse*; or, alternatively, as stated in Clarendon's History of the Great Rebellion, Royalist prisoners captured in Birmingham were sent to Coventry, which was a

Parliamentary stronghold. No date is given in Brewer to the former account, the latter being traceable to the mid-17th century (Great Rebellion). In ChambId this phrase is also derived from the English Civil War, failing, however, all dates, while in CollId the reader is referred to Clarendon's work with a cite, and to Brewer with a quote from Hulton's (1723-1815) History of Birmingham. In addition to this reference in Brewer, an additional version, indebted to a Mr Simpson (a city librarian in Coventry), is provided, focusing on a note in an issue of Coventry Standard of 1925. In the paper the city's name is derived from a 'covin-tree', i.e. an oak-tree standing in front of a castle, on which feudal barons used to hang enemies (a reference to Scott's Quentin Durward is given). Thus sending one to the covin-tree (and, hence, to Coventry) meant a capital punishment. The Great Rebellion is provided with a dating in Funk: 1642-9, when the people of Coventry were so annoyed with soldiers harboured among them that fraternization with them was strictly forbidden; for example a woman seen speaking to a soldier would be given the cold shoulder by her neighbours. Accordingly, no soldier wanted to be sent to Coventry, for he knew that he would be there ignored by the townspeople. Its second account, the less likely of the two in Funk's opinion, is the one preferred by the OED: citizens of Birmingham rose against the townsmen loyal to the King and sent them to Coventry nearby - which strongly supported Parliament - where

they were unable to help the King. The account in LongId deals with the great dislike for the soldiers on military duty in Coventry by the townspeople, who carried on their lives as if the soldiers were not there; an undated account. In R&S this verbal phrase is traced down to the Royalist prisoners then 'sent to Coventry', as the population there would have no sympathy for them. **COMMENT:** Two rival theories prevail, with neither proven superior to the other: interwoven and showing interrelated views at separate stages of the rebellion, they both could well serve as the original scene for the phrase. What is clear, at any rate, is that the idiom goes back to the disturbances of the Civil War, thus dating close to 1650. S3/D3

93.to be in Grub Street: to make a living writing petty articles.

The OED definition is reflected in the compilations studied: from "a tribe of mean and needy authors once living in *Grub Street, London*". In addition, 'writings of very poor quality are added in ChambId, while in M&M 'literary hacks' are updated with 'underpaid freelance writers', and in Noble the term reads 'aspiring writers', or any poor and struggling writers in general. For closer dates, Pope and Johnson are cited by Brewer, yet without more focus; while all chronological details are ignored in ChambId and M&M, broad lines are preferred in Noble: from the late 16th to the 17th

century. **COMMENT:** Other data being equally treated by all, Noble is proven superior over the rest on account of its dating the phrase in simple and tangible enough terms even to the uninitiated. S2/D3

94.to be from Missouri; "I'm from M., you've got to show me.": to believe nothing until it is demonstrated.

The phrase is stated in Brewer as having been used first in a speech (1899) by *Willard Vandiver*, Congressman from Missouri. Brewer's account is further elaborated in Funk: after a humorous remark by Willard Vandiver, a Congressman from Missouri; (according to the Washington Post) first used by him in an impromptu address to cast doubt on some of the unreasonable statements of the previous speaker at a Five O'Clock Club meeting in Philadelphia in 1899. Two origins are offered in R&S: first from the miners in Leadville, Colorado, where Missouri men were sometimes employed; completely ignorant of the nature of the work they had to be explained everything. In the other version the man from Missouri is depicted as shrewd and hard-headed; he will take nothing at its face value. The Missouri Congressman Colonel Vandiver, to R&S, was the person who popularized this phrase. Sadly, no dates are cited for either account. **COMMENT:** Whether Mr Vandiver was the founding father to this idiom, or only the one who used it with recorded results, remains unsolved; obviously, much of its popularity falls on him, and it can be

traced at least to the date recorded in Brewer: This is also supported by the OED quotes, the first of which cites a person claiming to recall its use c.1880 in Colorado. S3/D2

95.to carry coals to Newcastle: to do what is absurdly superfluous.

This former coal-mining centre is the origin agreeable to all compilations, with some care to point this out to a foreigner; with an insert by CollId, LongId, and R&S updating the situation: coal now being imported to Newcastle. A French parallel to this idiom is taken up by Brewer, 'Porter de l'eau à la rivière' (to carry water to the river), and Latin 'Alcinoo poma dare' (to give apples to Alchinous); yet with no dates. A loose time frame is provided in ChambId: back to time when Newcastle was - for some 150 years - the *primary supplier of coal to the rest of the country*, with no closer date, however. Fuller is cited in CollId as the first instance of use of this phrase in 1650; with an earlier version: '*as common as coals from Newcastle*' in 1606. This simile, however, is ascribed to Heywood in the OED. The French variant 'porter de l'eau à la rivière' is also listed. A record of this idiom by Heywood (1606) is also found by Funk. Since the former labelled it common, Funk's conclusion is that "It goes easily back to 15th and 16th century". In LongId another new variant is rendered: '*That's (like) coals to Newcastle*'; with no dates ventured. Beyond these basics,

'coals' is deemed an obsolete form in R&S, the singular being the modern form. Closer suggestions of its earliest use would have been preferred by this author. **COMMENT:** As only too often, the basic data is furnished, but dating is left fragmentary, or quitted with a mere guess. The accounts of CollId and Funk are worthy of a mention here: both discuss everything worth discussing - and thanks to them we may trace this idiom's birth somewhere in the 17th century or earlier; the generous approximations by the latter seem rather fallacious in this context. As to the time frame relevant for this idiom, the initial instance of recorded use dates to 1661 and the most recent to 1889, when coal was still plentiful in this region. S3/D3

96.to be in Queer Street: to be in (financial) difficulty. A potential origin in a *query* is recorded in Brewer: a tradesman might mark the name of a person with financial difficulties with one on his ledger. In ChambId this idiom is roughly dated to the early 19th century, when *queer* meant shady or criminal persons or activities. In CollId, the reader is referred to the *S.O.E.D.* definition, 'an imaginary street where people in difficulties reside'; also a connection suggested to the phrase *to be in Carey Street*, due to Bankruptcy Buildings located in this street, thus standing for people and firms in financial difficulties - whether a corruption of the latter is inferred by CollId is unclear. In

LongId it is labelled both colloquial and rather old-fashioned prior to derivation, offered above: perhaps changed from Carey Street, in central London, where the law courts dealing with bankrupts are found. The variant offered in Brewer is taken in R&S: from an alleged tradesman's practice of putting a *query* (question mark) beside the name of customers whose financial soundness was questioned. **COMMENT:** Two equally plausible origins are suggested, both 'query' and 'Carey Street' seem sound and worth argumentation - with the data at hand it remains impossible to advocate for one or the other; on account of quotes provided by the OED - chronologically - the term appears to have been in use already prior to the extermination of Bankruptcy Court in Carey Street, thus lending more weight on the former alternative. S2/D2

97. (not) to set the Thames on fire: (not) to do something marvellous or work wonders.

Both derivation and dating (at least for this English variant) are ignored in most source compilations. Instead, a handful of derivations are provided in Brewer: a popular explanation goes back to the '*temse*', a corn-sieve; another to a French parallel 'He will never set the Seine on fire', *seine* standing for a drag-net in fishing; yet these solutions are not tenable due to a similar locution in Latin, "Tiberum accendere nequaquam potest", (the Thames in lieu of the

Tiber), which has also produced 'to set the Rhine on fire (das Rhein anzuenden) as early as 1630. Unfortunately, no dating is ventured for any of these English variants. Mere definitions are given in CollId, LongId and OxfId, while two connections are suggested in Funk: first with the German "Er hat den Rhein und das Meer angezuendet" (c.1580), and second from "to set the temse on fire"; 'temse' being an old name for a sieve used in bolting meal; the negative variant then referring to an extremely slow workman. No dating is offered. In accord with Funk above, the same variant is provided in R&S: from 'temse', an old word for 'sieve'; it was namely said that an over-vigorous sifter might even set his temse on fire. No dating, either. **COMMENT:** With no dating offered for the English variant, one has to go further to the others; the Roman falls somewhat too distant to give any help here, but the German could serve as an anchor in time: Brewer dates it 1630, with Funk bettering him by some 50 years (1580). Whichever be closer to the truth, the English then goes back to the 17th century at the earliest (earliest quoted 1778 in the OED) - if the loan was made from that direction. This, by all these accounts, and with support from the OED, namely proves the most likely origin to the phrase. S2/D3

98.blarney; to (have) kiss(ed) the Blarney stone: to have a smoothly flattering or cajoling talk.

The triangular stone in the wall of *Blarney Castle* (built 1446) is claimed in Brewer as being almost inaccessible, twenty feet from its top, to the point that this ability cannot be possessed by anyone, and, more importantly, that the phrase cannot date further back than the mid-15th century. The above basics are elaborated on in CollId, the stone being under the battlements of the castle tower - thus one can kiss it only by being lowered from the roof of the tower upside down, held by the heels by a friend (though there are hand-rails at each side to give further support). In OxfId, this phrase equals the ability or intention to flatter, persuade or deceive people with one's talk. A mere definition is given in LongId, while in M&M a detailed derivation is supported with dating. The legend presumably dates back to year 1602 when McCarthy Mor, the lord of the castle, agreed to surrender after a long siege but finally managed to keep his castle by his evasive manner of speech. Having read his long, evasive reply to her own query, Queen Elizabeth is reported to have said: '*This is more of the same blarney*'. The above account by M&M is reiterated in R&S: Cormack McCarthy was besieged there in 1662 and eventually survived with the help of his verbal evasiveness and diplomatic skill. Since it is not found in print before the 19th century - or so is claimed in it - its appearance must be associated with the increasing Irish immigration to England. **COMMENT:** Here the last comes not the least by wide

margin: the last work awards the reader with the most valuable data: exact dating with later developments also discussed. Its numerical data, seen aside from that furnished in M&M, raises eyebrows, however: which of the two accounts is apt and reliable, and which falls wide. To the average student this remains a puzzle: with the help of this data, the saying cannot be dated more exactly than between 1602 and 1662. Here the present author doubts carelessness on the part of M&M; the time span of a century would be very viable for an incident behind a phrase and its true birth. This would also be neatly evidenced by the OED data; its first two dates are from 1766 and 1796 - some hundred years later than the episode with Cormack McCarthy proving his verbal talent.

S3/D3

99. to grin like a Cheshire cat - (no actual definition by the OED).

What her grin looks like is not even bothered a description in two out of the six works (Brewer and Funk) - as also in the OED - and all find it more or less a nuisance to account for. With the admission of this old simile never having been satisfactorily explained, two stories are related in Brewer: the first is that *Cheshire cheese* was once sold moulded like a cat that appeared to be grinning; another that local cats knew *Cheshire was a county palatine* (i.e. bestowed with certain privileges) and found the idea a source of perpetual

amusement. Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland (1865) is cited as its great popularizer. 'Origin unknown' is the abrupt coverage in ChambId. A claim by Eric Partridge is referred in CollId as its use in a derogatory spirit from c.1770, and its actual use by Charles Lamb in 1780: "I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who *grinned like a Cheshire cat*." Datewise, Brewer is here overshadowed by far. As in the rest of works, its growing popularity in the Victorian age is attributed to Lewis Carroll's description in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, even with a quote that the Cheshire cat "vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, it remaining some time after the rest of it had gone". "Well, I've often seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice, "but never a grin without a cat." To the description a continuing grin or smile is inserted a nuance by OxfId: especially *in a senseless or inappropriate way*, with a note of this 'old simile's' obscure origin and date of the author (1832-98), with the account in CollId also summarized: this cat could disappear except for his grin which remained visible. Brewer's details are reiterated in Funk: possibly Cheshire's status (county palatine with royal privileges) gave the cat its blissful smile at the mere thought of it. Another suggestion - and more characteristic of its renderings - is that an influential family employed a would-be sign-painter to depict many signboards of the local inns with its crest, a

rampant lion, and the result turned out resembling more of a grinning cat. Whichever the origin, the idiom is dated back by mid-18th century at the latest - occurring in the writings of Peter Pindar (John Wolcot) among others - and also in Carroll's work. In LongId this cat smiles widely, showing all her teeth; originating in the Cheshire cat in Carroll's Alice's Adventures (1865), who has a wide smile on its face and slowly disappears, except for its smile. **COMMENT:** As it is shown that the phrase appears prior to Carroll - Charles Lamb of 1780 is cited in CollId, and Peter Pindar of mid-18th century in Funk (John Wolcott also quoted in the OED, these dates being also the earliest stated there) - its dating as well as true origins lie in historical darkness. S3/D1

100.to fight like Kilkenny cats: to fight until annihilating each other.

Derivations differ. In Brewer it is dated to the *Irish rebellion* of 1798, during which a group of soldiers garrisoned in Kilkenny amused themselves by tying two cats together by their tails and throwing the pair across a clothesline to fight. At the sight of an approaching officer a trooper cut the tails with a sword and the cats bolted. The explanation for the bleeding tails was that the cats had been fighting and devoured each other all but the tails. This account is almost word for word recapitulated in CollId and also in OxfId, with no dates provided in the latter. Three

different stories are furnished in Funk, none excelling the first, again the above by Brewer, now dated about 1800, when Kilkenny was occupied by a troop of Hessian hirelings, some of whom came up with the said pastime. In a 'battle of thousands', of the second story with no dating, the *army of a thousand cats* adversary to that of Kilkenny and similar in number were defeated, with the latter still alive in the morning following the all-night fight. In the third account, originally provided by Jonathan Swift, deemed as the most probable by Funk, the Kilkenny of the 17th century is depicted as lying on either side of a small stream, populated by *two warring factions, English and Irish*, with such a friction as soon led to blows resulting in a proper turmoil destroying the town. In LongId's pages, this 'rather old-fashioned phrase is derived as in the majority of works here, along the lines suggested in Brewer, yet with all dates ignored. **COMMENT:** The episode furnished by Brewer persists in all derivations offered - no small wonder, when weighed against all others: a plausible scene is offered for an event like this with accurate dating to a historical setting - so life-like that the other sources choose but to retell it, CollId even to the extent of hardly employing any words of its own. Against this scene, second version by Funk appears almost as if a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound & fury, signifying nothing"; even if its own favourite and true-to-life as such, yet not accounting for the existence of cats.

Hence, and by support of the OED data, this idiom is likely to date back at least to the early 18th century. S3/D2

VII. DISCUSSION ON DICTIONARY ANALYSIS

VII.1. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE TREATMENT OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS IN THE IDIOM DICTIONARIES STUDIED

The results of the analysis comparing the data furnished by the ten compilations, together with the details provided by the OED, yielded four categories based on the following gradation. Category 0 is formed of the accounts where all the issues relevant for this study were ignored, resulting in the grade 'nought'. Category 1 contains all the items where one of the essentials was covered, whether the character or location in which the proper name had its origin, or the date of first recorded use of the phrase, or other informative facts on its background. Hence, in Category 2 two pieces of such information were provided, and, finally, in Category 3 all the desired aspects were covered.

Category 0: 1 item

A single representative (*a clever dick*) of this unwanted class emerged. Among the three compilers none had any idea as to from whom, when and whereby the proper name in the idiom in question has derived its origins. This situation was slightly improved by the OED data, even if only on account of dating. The total lack of at least potential derivation might be accounted for by the possibility that the phrase goes back

to an appellative abbreviated to this form, traceable to 'detective', for example.

Category 1: 4 items

Two idioms in this category appear to be euphemistic names for God in exclamations (*for Pete's sake; for the love of Mike*), of which the identity of neither is revealed in any of the sources. Of the two remaining one is a generic use of a name to represent persons who regard themselves clever (*smart aleck*), and the last item (*Adam's ale*) refers to the legendary forefather of the human race. In other words, all names here are used vicariously, to stand either for any resourceful person, for God, or for the first man. Apparently it is due to the high degree of generalization that nothing is known of their derivation either; and also all dating would be lost without the support of the OED, excepting the case of *smart aleck*, dated to the 1860s by Brewer.

Category 2: 22 items

The failure to date these idioms within at least the nearest half a century, let alone a decade, appears to be the feature dominating this category. This is well instanced by *any/every Tom, Dick or Harry*, whose closest chronological estimates are as round as 'Victorian times' (Brewer). This group seems to

share another feature in common with Category 1: the majority of the proper names in these idioms are also used in a generic way, the only exceptions being *Al at Lloyd's*, *to put on the ritz*, and *(not) to set the Thames on fire*, which all go back to historically identifiable characters or locational entities.

The subject matter they arise from is: properized appellatives (5 in all), exemplified by *when Miss/Mr Right comes along*, *to ride Shank's mare*, *to be in Civvy Street*; also *Nellie (Duff) is*, in essence, vicarious, used euphemistically for 'life'), biblical (4 cases) such as *doubting Thomas*, *St Martin's summer*, *not to know one from Adam*, and other topics used highly generically. Also three of the total of four slang expressions are here; two of these (*not on your Nellie*, *to take the mickey out of someone*) have their origins in rhyming slang, and are used euphemistically, while the last has derived through phonetic imitation (*all my eye and Betty Martin*).

The remaining ten idioms fall in somewhere between the two, with a handful of items **potentially** derivable among them (*Aunt Sally*, *Tommy rot*, *Buggins's turn*, *Tom Tiddler's ground*). It is true, nevertheless, that to some of these items a fictitious or euphemistic origin has been conjectured: 'Buggins' has sounded to some compilers an average civil servant, 'Sally' a genuine "Mrs Grundy", 'Tommy' a typical industrial worker, and 'Tom Tiddler' could

simply derive via spoonerism from 'Tim Toddler', i.e. an infant living still in the perfect bliss in his mother's lap.

At the outset, there existed no ungrounded expectations to have the origins derived and dated more clearly than proved to be the case. This attitude was supported by the finding that the namesakes of the characters appearing in these idioms were traceable to certain factual entities in sociohistoric terms. Nevertheless, no more than very approximate datings were to be found for each of these characters (beyond the instanced uses pinpointed by the OED). Against this background, it is not surprising that the most generic items in the class, neatly exemplified by *Miss/Mr Right*, *Shank's mare*, and the generic 'street group' (*Carey*, *Civvy*, and *Queer Street*) were for all sources the most difficult to assess chronologically.

Category 3: 73 items

On the strength of the findings in Categories 1 and 2, the following question suggested itself at the outset. In what way are the idioms, or, particularly, the proper name constituents in the idioms, in Category 3 different from those in the former categories? Or, more specifically, are there inherent in them some factors which render them more readily traceable to origins and to the point of time when they were 'born', or at least gained their currency?

A careful study of this group reveals that one common denominator to most of them is that they can be brought back to a definite origin, literary or other, whether authentic or only believed to be so. Among the total of 73 idioms constituting Category 3, a majority of 45 representatives are so traceable. In addition, among the remaining 28 items 13 go back to a certified historical character (exemplified by *Soapy Sam*), leaving thus merely 6 cases as legendary, fictitious or lacking evidential corroboration (*Cain, John Doe*, and *Davy Jones*, for instance), and 9 cases referring to a locality which itself may be well-known but the person or phenomenon associated with it remains without verifiable identity or other undisputable anchorage to historical time (*Bronx cheer, Philadelphia lawyer, Kilkenny cats*).

Why is it then that these fifteen idioms with a proper name lacking a definite historical connection have reached the full score entitling their entry into Category 3? All these cases have been substantiated clearly by other historical data, such as newspaper quotation, mention in a private letter, a legal record, or an entry in an official document, and have thus been placeable to a fairly fixed time frame, oftenmost within some decades. This is exemplified by *gone for a burton*, *to send one to Coventry*, and *to have kissed the Blarney stone*. For some of these idioms an accurate dating would, for apparent reasons, have been practically impossible; for instance in idioms involving a

lengthy historical process until their apt metaphorism has gained full effect (*shipshape and Bristol fashion, to talk Billingsgate, to carry coals to Newcastle*), and such extension will render precise dating impossible.

VII.2. FINDINGS ON THE OUTCOME OF ANALYSIS ON THE OED

A need for a categorization similar to the system used on the source compilations (idiom dictionaries) arose from observations on the OED accounts. Hence, a new investigation using the same method and grading system was conducted for the assessment of data in the OED.

A surprising finding very soon cropped up: on an average, the details provided in the OED were uncommonly frequently found to be equally incomplete and defective - occasionally downright unreliable - as the information presented in the idiom compilations or dictionaries. The etymological record, it is true, offered in the OED with its illustrative quotations is, beyond doubt, the best it can offer on its 22 000 pages. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this treasury of historical record was found to fail its student on the aspects determined essential for this investigation even more often than the sources.

This is unarguably corroborated by the following comparative data: the sources included 73 proper name idioms in Category 3 vs. the 55 items to be found in the OED in this

category. In Categories 1 and 0 the two parties (i.e. source compilations and the OED) were practically of equal strength (differing in three cases only, to the discredit of the OED). The only field where the latter excelled over the sources was Category 2, with 22 items against the 37 in favour of the OED. Nevertheless, to be impartial towards both, one does well to bear in mind that the former figures represent the prime of several comprehensive accounts to be found in the sources while the record supplied by the OED goes always back to the one and same work. As a rule, these OED defects were due to the following shortcomings: superficial treatment of entries, lack of discussion on rivalling etymologies, fragmental background developments, vacuous definition, incomplete or even lacking derivation or dating, highly selective etymological data. All these are exemplified in detail below.

Category N (of non-occurrence): 1 item

Strangely, the OED does not recognize an item (*to do/pull a brodie*) substantiated in three of the sources (Brewer, Funk, and R&S). This omission might be due to the idiom being essentially an Americanism, which might have been deemed as never having gained ground in Britain; or, alternatively, and

perhaps more probably, it became rejected owing to its scanty record in British print.

Category 0: 1 item

One case emerged to earn the rating 'nought' (*as poor as Job's turkey*), explained by the OED authorship with a mere note. All critical aspects, starting with definition, were not as informative as one would hope ("a type of poverty"), accompanied with a derivation and background data which were all less than adequate. Furthermore, the dates carried by the first quote in the OED were overdue by some four decades. In other words: on occasion, the OED can also be superficial and uninformative to the extent to justify grounded criticism. Indeed, such instances, met with unexpectedly frequently, would degrade this great dictionary, without its supremacy in dating, among the mass of mediocrity. In conclusion, this was among the most stupefying observations on "the largest dictionary in the world".

Category 1: 6 items

To score one point is attributable to various inadequacies: on the part of *smart aleck* and *clever dick* the OED fares

little better than the compilations; in other words, the single point is won by furnishing records of the first instanced use. For the next item (*to raise Cain*) the OED reaches its lowest yet record by not merely neglecting to define the phrase in an appropriate way, but doing it in such a roundabout fashion as lends itself to mislead the student: the idiom is simply and bluntly quitted with "to behave in a disturbing way", very much in line with "a type of poverty" for *as poor as Job's turkey*. As a result, a not so well-read student arriving from, say, central Africa, or the Indian subcontinent, and hence likely to be unfamiliar with the Bible, would simply become no more knowledgeable of the relevant reference of these idioms in the face of such inadequate definitions. To complete this picture, two other idioms of this category are treated with similar oversight: *as pleased as Punch* is covered with a mere note "an allusive phrase" with its exact meaning being left obscure; likewise, *to grin like a Cheshire cat* is left without any definition at all.

The most significant drawback in the case of *before you could say Jack Robinson* is the roundabout treatment of the idiom in the OED: it is aptly defined and duly furnished with datings, but its nonexistent derivation together with the genuinely inadequate background data is worth decreasing the status by a grade to Category 1. To be more precise, the OED does not even touch upon the viable possibilities presented

amply in the source compilations, half of them (4) elaborating on citations from Dictionary of Vulgar Tongue (1785) by Grose, some on those from The Archaic Dictionary (1846) by Halliwell. These records are totally ignored by the OED.

Category 2: 37 items

What characterizes the representatives of this category appears to be linked with several elements. In summary of all these various features, one common factor perhaps could justify the mention; namely the apparent overcaution and unwarranted reserve emerging as a kind of keynote in the way of coverage adopted and maintained by the OED. This is strikingly illustrated by the examples *Black Maria*, *Soapy Sam*, and *Uncle Tom*. For each of these cases several sources can suggest a perfectly legitimate and viable derivation, which is not even touched upon by the OED as a potentiality. As noted on some occasions earlier, the OED and the authority it carries would lose little by at least discussing the evidence strongly advocated by a number of authors of idiom compilations. No less than 13 cases out of the total 37 (roughly a third) are of the type depicted above.

A lesser share among the items in Category 2 for the OED are those furnished with overly vague definitions (in addition to the two examples (*to raise Cain*; *as poor as Job's*

turkey) given in Category 1, exemplified in *doubting Thomas*, *to take the mickey out of someone*, and *to grin like a Cheshire cat*. There are, in other words, at least five cases (five per cent of the 'Top Hundred') where also the OED has been incapable of an adequate definition, i.e. one that is sufficiently informative the present writer. The remaining 19 cases are those where the OED has, it is true, provided an adequate or even excellent definition, but only rather unsatisfactory accounts on both derivation and dating in one and the same case.

Category 3: 55 items

Obviously, this category is equally well annotated on all three counts as its equivalent in the sources. On occasion, the OED **can** excel any of the source compilations by furnishing an entry that comfortably fulfils each three criteria. Some cases exemplifying this are idioms no. 38 (*Colonel Blimp*), 46 (*Buggins's turn*), 50 (*Parkinson's law*), 60 (*to put on the ritz*), 71 (*mumbo jumbo*), 78 (*sweet Fanny Adams*), 81 (*Tom Tiddler's ground*), 88 (*shipshape and Bristol fashion*), and 89 (*to talk Billingsgate*).

What is nevertheless remarkable in a final overview, is that the OED has thus excelled only in 55 cases out of a hundred against the 73 cases for the compilations. In other words, in a further 17 cases the most comprehensive among the

consulted idiom dictionaries could come up with a better overall coverage than the OED.

In a nutshell, with certain exceptions, the OED authorship really can produce a well-drafted entry in terms of defining, deriving, and annotating (quoting instances of recorded use and furnishing other relevant and illustrating background data) English idioms containing a proper name. In summary, the OED has its weaknesses - sometimes failing to an astonishing degree - but, equally convincingly, it can also excel over all other reference works in terms of appropriate, adequate, and relevant data.

One of the working presumptions for this Category was that all the idioms having a literary foundation, i.e. being substantiated in print (whether fiction, newspaper articles, documented stage shows, songs, etc.) were included in this category since some form of record of their birth had survived, in contrast with idioms that had been born 'illiterates', in live conversation, and hence so subsisted until they found a 'literary home' in any of the above formats. Accordingly, the latter group scored generally one grade less, i.e. Category 2 and downwards, since their very birth was, as a rule, obscure. The few exceptions which would prove the rule also in this context are exemplified by *Black Maria*, *gerrymander*, *to pull a brodie*, all of which apparently came into existence as colloquial phrases, but were soon accepted into common literary coinage, thus providing a birth

certificate accurate enough within a decade (the first item) or within the actual year (the latter two idioms).

VII.3. FINDINGS ON THE EXPLANATIONS PRESENTED IN THE OED IN COMPARISON WITH THOSE IN THE IDIOM DICTIONARIES

In a concluding analysis comparing the accounts of the idiom compilations on one hand, and those of the OED on the other, some central observations suggested themselves.

First, unexpectedly often, idioms were covered by the latter in a superficial and vaguish manner in that no propositions, however well argued or evidenced on the part of the idiom compilers (i.e. with titles and dates for the printed works provided), were discussed or even touched upon by the editors. This crude policy of total exclusion of relevant argumentation presented by other sources was adopted by the editorial staff in no less than 22 cases out of the hundred idioms studied. The idioms listed by their ordinal number are as follows: 6, 11, 12, 17, 22, 29, 32, 35, 43, 45, 51, 66, 70, 73, 82, 83, 84, 87, 94, 96, 99, and 100.

In other words, 22 per cent of the proper name idioms constituting the material of this thesis are not at all examined for the suggested derivational background presented in the source compilations. The writer of this thesis finds very little to defend in such a summary approach adopted by the editors of the OED towards these compilations which all had been for years available before the publication of the

second edition. In addition, for some idioms, such etymological accounts (instanced by *gone for a burton*) are occasionally dismissed with the abrupt note: "None of the several (...) explanations of the origin of the expression is authenticated by contemporary printed evidence" (OED s.v.'burton³).

Second, in the case of a historical forebear or literary source for an idiom containing a personal proper name virtually all compilations (excepting ChambId, and OxfId) readily discuss various views proposed by other compilers - occasionally even by the OED - often, then, suggesting their own candidate or arguing for or against some of the theories presented by others. This is all very educational to the student with an etymological turn of mind. Yet, he or she is equally emphatically disappointed by an even more frequent lack - often, total lack - of any information at all in the opposite case; i.e. when little is generally known of another idiom with no such historical or literary support. In such cases it would greatly help the inquisitive student if the OED could fill the gap with an additional note such as "possibly in allusion to ..." and list the most plausible candidate or two, exactly as it chose to do in the case of *Lynch law*.

On occasion, the OED approach strikes the student almost as something of a 'black and white' filter used in photography to fade the world that is around us in full

colour. This contrast is well illustrated by the apparently similar idioms *Darby and Joan*, *Tom, Dick and Harry*, and *merry-andrew* on one hand, and *smart aleck*, *clever dick*, and *every man jack (of them)* on the other. The little that is allegedly known of the latter three will hardly be increased by a complete ignorance of any suggestions offered in other works to explain their origins. Our knowledge is accumulated by hard work - sometimes also by what seems a mere chance, though this also is oftenmost preceded by a decent amount of effort - and, if every scholar in the field accepted the method of the 'least resistance', fresh evidence would seldom accrue.

Third, another peculiar feature in the OED is illustrated by the case of *Aunt Sally* in that the dictionary appears overcautious (in the face of all evidence) in not deriving the figurative sense from the literal. There is no shortage of evidence to substantiate these developments: all instances of the latter precede the former by several decades, underlying figurative - transferred (as the OED prefers to call it) - meaning. The above finding (the failure to derive the figurative sense from the literal one) can be further evidenced by another peculiarity, namely the OED's systematic line of what could be called '**dummy derivation**': it provides fragmental background for the person or place name involved, say *Soapy Sam*, here instanced by descriptions of the adjective '*soapy*', only to carefully guard itself

against dealing with the actual phrase ('soapy Sam'). Finally the OED produces the whole idiom in their quote(s), thus eliciting an impression suggesting the existence of such a coinage, evidenced by these literary citations, but evidently in such a reference frame as not necessarily making the constituents have anything to do with each other. Justly, this policy might be termed peculiar - at the very least - if not downright misleading.

The same overcautious attitude adopted, again, in the case of *Nancy boy* adds up to a kind of oversight, really, when the informative value of the OED investigation is in focus. Against this background, this widely acclaimed dictionary almost as often as not appears to be but a compilation of recorded data with little importance due to its informative aspect on etymology. This is well reflected in the proportion of what is here designated as 'dummy derivation': among the one hundred idioms studied, the OED derives only two thirds; in other words a third of them remain cases of non-derivation (dealt with below) or 'dummy derivation', for instance idioms 7, 8, 19, 23, 30, 58, 63, 88, 94, 95, 98.

Fourth, there are also incidents - to this author surprisingly numerous - where the OED gives no derivation at all, while the sources are amply informative, often suggesting several viable options. This policy is evidenced

by idioms such as no.5, 6, 12, 20, 26, 29, 32, 43, 49, 51, 66, 70, 82, 83, 84, 86, 94, and 99.

Fifth, an astonishing feature downgrading the final OED mark wherever this phenomenon occurs are the shortcomings in defining some idioms; an attitude which is complemented by the dictionary's mention of "allusive phrase", and, on occasion, crowned by a total lack of definition (instanced by *to grin like a Cheshire cat*). This group of haphazard attempts for a definition include at least the following idioms: 21, 22, 30, 31, 32, 33, 49, 51, 85, and 99.

Sixth, there are some occasions where the OED also dates the recorded instances of idioms in rather a summary fashion, i.e. the editors have totally ignored any such data furnished by various idiom compilations. Some examples are provided by items 22, 33, 34, 35, 98.

In contrast with the above failings, the OED can occasionally excel the sources also in respects other than its strongest asset, the usually accurate dating, namely in terms of definition. Some instances where it excels the sources in apt and gripping paraphrases are: *Darby and Joan*, *a Roland for an Oliver*, *Colonel Blimp*, *Hobson's choice*, and *Rip van Winkle*.

In addition, whenever the OED quotes another source - among the idioms studied, only Brewer - it invariably mentions the original source, a policy which is hardly ever followed among the idiom compilations by ChambId (idiom no.9

from Brewer), CollId (19, 66, and 100, all from Brewer), Funk (no.65 from Brewer), Hunt (no.48 from the OED, no.75 from Brewer), M&M (no.70 from Brewer), Noble (nos. 4 and 79, both from Brewer), and, in particular, R&S (nos. 34, 35, 41, 45, 51, 66, and 70, all from Brewer). Deriving data from other sources is also regularly practised by CollId, but, with the above exceptions, it makes a point of mentioning them (at least on five occasions, for items 76, 82, 87, 92, and 99). Altogether, 17 cases strongly redolent of plagiarism emerged among the Top Hundred idioms cross-checked between compilations, namely the following: 4, 9, 19, 34, 35, 41, 45, 48, 51, 65, 66, 70, 75, 79, 100 (in two instances the same source was copied by two compilations).

Furthermore, while the OED is presumably very seldom, on the evidence of this study, found presenting rather unusual, let alone eccentric, views on the etymology of these proper name idioms, this is another privilege freely resorted to by some of the compilers, occasionally Noble (idioms 6, 89), more notably R&S (48, 78, 82), and M&M (39, 47, 82), and particularly Funk (6, 28, 30, 99, and 100).

In summary of the above findings, a word of explanation may be in place here with a view to doing full justice to the editorship of the OED, which has been in this study "weighed and found wanting" more often than warranted by the uniform authority enjoyed by it throughout the English-speaking world. In the above, the expositions presented in this work

have been examined and evaluated in much the same way as those in the actual sources, i.e. idiom compilations - possibly even with a somewhat heavier hand than them, due to its authoritative status. This evaluation also ignored the fact that the actual emphasis of the second OED edition lay in *adding new items and senses*, rather than seeking to improve existing definitions and etymologies. These editorial priorities considered, the failings that at the outset struck this author as rather astounding appear a great deal more conceivable - and forgivable.

VIII. LEXICAL FEATURES OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS

SOME SPECIAL LEXICAL FEATURES IN PROPER NAME IDIOMS

VIII.1. ON THE DATING OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS

The first dates for each proper name idiom in this thesis are those given as the earliest two in the OED. They signal the approximate date of appearance of that particular idiom in English, i.e. the dates by which the respective idiom had gained a foothold in the language. These dates, obviously, almost invariably differ from the earliest origins of the idiom, as it usually takes some time for a term to become common coinage. *Alice in Wonderland* may serve as an illustrative example: the eponymous work was published in 1865 and its sequel Through the Looking Glass, which is said to have helped the heroine to become famous, in 1871. The first two quotes for *Alice in Wonderland* in the OED are from 1925 and 1931, representing an interval of sixty years, at least. Another literary idiom, *King Charles's head*, has the first dates 1882 and 1889, while the original work, David Copperfield came out in 1850, suggesting a maturation period of some thirty years. Such decades-long 'hatching-periods' are nothing unusual: *Queen Anne's dead* is quoted in the OED as having appeared by the mid-19th century (1840 and 1859, to be exact), by which time the queen had been - literally - dead for some 130 years.

As an example of some essentially long intervals between the source and the related phrase may be mentioned a great many proper name idioms with a biblical personage or location as source: *as old as Adam, as poor as Job's turkey, Eve's daughter, to raise Cain, to out-Herod Herod/to out-Judas Judas, to go into the land of Nod, doubting Thomas, St Luke's summer*. All these phrases suggest a span of some two millennia.

Another noteworthy point which came forth is the observation that even if the birth of a proper name idiom is traceable to an accurate date (the publication of a book, release of a film, first performance of a show or song, delivery of a speech, and so forth), the date by which it actually has 'come into its own', gained permanent foothold in the language - its lexicalization, in short - is seldom fixable to an accurate year. As a rule, a 'maturation period' of a decade or two is required, suggesting that the 'true birth' of a phrase - its establishment in common usage, is not a matter of a year or two, but a much slower process.

These aspects would certainly prove most interesting in any organized attempt to establish a more thorough conception of the temporal aspects of English proper name idioms, such as the average 'longevity' of a typical proper name idiom, periods (if any) of more or less active formation, the periods and numbers of loans (direct or indirect) from and to the other side of the Atlantic, and a number of related

issues. On the grounds of the scope of this thesis, however, such aspects remain the subject for further study.

VIII.2. ON THE FREQUENCY OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS

As an introductory note, the denominations 'GB' and 'US', wherever they appear in the frequency tables of this paper, signify larger groups than just British or American names: not all idioms thus labelled contain proper names - whether of person or place - that are 'vernacular' or referring to Britain or the United States. There are, in other words, phrases that carry also names referring to or originating in countries, ethnic communities or languages other than the British or American. This aspect is neatly illustrated by idioms associated to biblical contexts, and those coined by the armed forces under foreign operations; these contexts are, indeed, the major two origins to such non-native ingredients among English proper name idioms.

The former (7/24 in all [Top Hundred vs. Five Hundred]) are exemplified by *Adam's ale*, *as poor as Job's turkey*, and *to raise Cain*; the latter (2/7 respectively) by *jerrycan*, *the black hole of Calcutta*, and *to do a Dunkirk*. Among the material - both the final data and the original collection - this 'foreign legion' constitutes an approximate share of nine per cent. [The representatives among the Five Hundred are to found in Appendix 3.]

The tabulation of both the Top Hundred and the Five Hundred (original collected data used for statistical comparisons) has resulted in the following general picture (the parenthetical figures following the Top Hundred data, again, refer to the respective statistical analysis on the Five Hundred, unless otherwise stated).

An overwhelming majority of 83 (85.4) per cent of all proper name idioms are those with person names; in other words, only every sixth of these idioms refers to a location. Among person names, an equally overriding share is held by male names, overshadowing women by four to one; to rephrase, men are overrepresented (and women underrepresented) by some 30 per cent, considering their actual share of the British population. Specifically British population, for 74 (80.1) per cent of all person name idioms, and even more of those with a place name, 83 (84.7) per cent are British in origin; this is natural enough, in view of the share of British works among the source compilations (eight British works versus two American, reflecting the same proportion of four to one).

Nearly a half of the person names in these idioms are First Names, 43 per cent (46.7); the remainder is distributed unevenly between Last Names and Identity Names, 38 against 19 per cent. The LN and IN shares appear, however, much more even in the larger data, namely 25.7 vs. 27.7 per cent. Irrespective of the latter percentages, Person Names are clearly dominated by First Names.

Among the Person Names, two out of every three (67.7 per cent) appear in Noun Phrases, which also constitute a slightly lesser, but still impressive proportion of all proper name idioms, 54 per cent (57.8). The next most represented phrase groups (Top Hundred vs. the 500) are VPs (17 vs. 11 per cent), PPs (11 vs. 1 per cent), Ss (7 vs. 14 per cent), and APs (3 vs. 4 per cent), making Adverb Phrases the least frequent group: only each one hundredth idiom in this data contains an AvP. The respective shares among all idioms follow the quoted figures within two percentage units.

The results derived from Place Names are somewhat conflicting, perhaps due to their modest representation among the Top Hundred (18 entries). There their largest share falls on VPs (61 per cent) and the NPs make up only 22 per cent, the rest being shared by AvPs at 11 per cent, and Ss at 6 per cent. A comparison with the larger data corrects the internal proportions within Place Names into the following order and shares: NPs (38 per cent), VPs (30), Ss (18), AvPs (8), PPs (4), and APs (2). The latter distribution is likely to be closer to the true frequencies.

In summary, the evidence gathered from the frequencies of the six phrase types among the three classes of male and female (and, to a lesser degree, place) names might be summed up as follows. The typical representative of an English idiom with a proper name constituent is a male First Name appearing in a Noun Phrase premodified by an adjective with an

unpleasant or bland ring to it (*smart Aleck*) or its Identity Name counterpart with no qualifying element (*Paul Pry*).

At the other end of the scale, equally typically, stands an untitled female Identity Name postmodified by a Noun Phrase, the complete structure forming a favourably sounding Adverb or Preposition Phrase. Or, in fact, such a female does not stand there, since her occurrence in such a proper name idiom is against all likelihood (**like Anne Lovable of the Weather Service*). The same is true of an Identity Name in a Preposition Phrase; with or without pre- or postmodification, such a structure simply does not materialize in an English proper name idiom (**according to honourable Jack Jones*). The rest of the Person Name idioms fall in between these two extremes.

As for the Place Names, the typical occurrence may be exemplified by a Noun Phrase with its Place Name serving as a premodifier (*Philadelphia lawyer*), or Verb Phrase containing an unmodified Place Name (*to send a person to Coventry*), and both phrases, again, carrying unsavoury overtones. The anterior formation, Place Names in Noun Phrases, being such an abundant denomination, it is somewhat peculiar that no modifying element of any kind is allowed in Verb Phrases containing related nominal constituents; **to miss the white cliffs of Dover* is a perfectly acceptable phrase in English, but, on the evidence of this investigation, there is no proper name idiom in English having such a structure. Why

this should be so would provide an absorbing challenge for anyone seriously interested in the English idiom; yet that remains a challenge to be met in some other thesis.

VIII.3. ON THE LOCALIZATION OF PROPER NAME IDIOMS

By way of a preliminary note, the denominations 'GB' and 'US', introduced above in conjunction with aspects of frequency, demand also here a few precursory comments. As a standard practice, when any such abbreviated symbol (GB, US, IRE or AUS) stands for the respective country in tabular or summarized presentation used in this thesis, it signifies a proper name idiom, *not necessarily* suggesting origins in the designated country, but - as a rule - referring to an *idiom mentioning a British, American, Irish, or Australian person or place*. The exceptions to this general practice are discussed in the introductory note opening the previous chapter.

The material of the 500 proper name idioms collected from the precursory sources contained an overwhelming majority of British idioms, i.e. those referring to a British person or place, as compared to the scanty share of American items, and yet scantier catch of Australian or Irish ones. The respective share of each country among the Top Hundred (the original material of 500 items in parentheses) is as follows: Britain 73 (411), United States 23 (71), Australia 2

(11), and Ireland 2 (6). Thus, the locational spread is strongly focussed in Britain: by 73 (82) per cent, as compared with the United States with her 23 (15) per cent, or Australia with 2 (2) per cent, or Ireland with 2 (1) per cent.

As for the idioms with a place name element examined as a distinct group, more or less the same distribution comes forth. The Top Hundred contains 18 place name idioms with a reference to a British, Irish, or American location - no items from Australia appeared (cf. the respective maps in Appendix 2). A great many more place name idioms also including Australian sites occur in the original data of 500 proper name idioms; to pinpoint all such localities amounting close to a hundred entries with a place name, not infrequently bearing on a local geographical curiosity (*at Narrowdale noon*), and a certain, perhaps half-forgotten, alley in London carrying a special connotation in a particular phrase (*the three tailors of Tooley Street*) would undoubtedly provide an absorbing challenge, which, however, falls wide of the objectives of this investigation.

On the evidence of the original data, however, the following general comment could be made on the locational characteristics of British place name idioms. Among these, an overwhelming majority of two thirds refer to the capital region, London with its suburbs, namely 20 out of the total 30 phrases. These are exemplified by *Bow Street runners*, *the*

man on the Clapham omnibus, Paddington fair, as black as Newgate knocker, within the sound of Bow Bells, all Lombard Street to a China orange.

In addition, there are 17 imaginary or jocular geographical designations (*all holiday at Peckham, to send a person to Birchin Lane, to drink at Freeman's Quay*) serving a similar role that the person names made up of 'properized' appellatives carry in their denomination. The main attention, therefore, has been focused on the general features typifying the Place Name idiom as well as finding, at the least, the approximate site of each of the 18 place names constituting the geographic department of the Top Hundred.

VIII.4. ON THE AREAS WHERE PROPER NAME IDIOMS HAVE ORIGINATED

Personal proper name idioms having their origins in a certain area are grouped under comprehensive categories of human endeavour. Parenthetical data stands for the number of idioms among the Top Hundred assigned to such a denomination.

These denominations are not rigorously mutually exclusive; a certain phrase may be entered in two categories, which are not mutually exclusive, i.e. *Uncle Sam* has been entered into those of 'Literature & Press' as well as of 'The Armed Forces'.

LITERATURE & PRESS (23):

Doubting Thomas (Bible); *Uncle Tom* (fiction); *Alice in Wonderland* (children's fiction), *King Charles's head* (fiction); *to out-Herod Herod* (Bible); *Box and Cox* (play); *Hobson's choice* (article); *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (crime story); *Parkinson's law* (satire), *to be in Burke* (aristocratic catalogue); *What will Mrs Grundy say?* (play); *Namby Pamby* (sugary poetry); *Paul Pry* (comedy); *Rip van Winkle* (novel); *Walter Mitty* (short story); *the real Simon Pure* (play); *John Bull* (satire); *Darby and Joan* (article); *as poor as Job's turkey* (newspaper sketch); *Heath-Robinson, Colonel Blimp, to keep up with the Joneses* (newspaper drawing); *to gerrymander* (journalese)

PASTIME & LEISURE (15):

to lead the life of Riley, to put on the Ritz (luxury & elitism); *Pooh Bah* (officious self-importance); *Joe Miller* (variety show); *as pleased as Punch* (puppetry); *Aunt Sally* (target of derogation); *Tom Tiddler's ground* (children's games); *according to Hoyle* (card games); *Hobson's choice* (horse-hiring); *Bronx cheer* (audience reprobation); *to pull a brodie* (betting); *as happy as Larry, the real McCoy* (boxing)

BIBLE & RELIGION (11):

doubting Thomas (failing faith); *Adam's ale* (beverages); *not to know one from Adam* (failures of recognition); *as poor as Job's turkey* (extreme poverty); *By George!* (patron saints);

all my eye and Betty Martin (church liturgy); *to raise Cain* (human frailty); *to out-Herod Herod* (tyranny); *St Martin's summer* (calendary saints); *nosey Parker* (officious interference); *to rob Peter to pay Paul* (fiscal policy)

THE ARMED FORCES (11):

Uncle Sam (army supplies); *Colonel Blimp* (military intolerance); *Kilroy was here* (vessel inspection); *Tommy Atkins* (the rank-and-file); *sweet Fanny Adams* (canteen food); *Black Hole of Calcutta* (imprisonment), *gone for a Burton* (missing serviceman); *to be in Civvy Street* (release from service); *to send to Coventry* (military punishment); *to (have) kiss(ed) the Blarney Stone* (tactics of persuasion); *a Roland for an Oliver* (even combat)

POLITICS & SOCIAL ISSUES (11):

I'm from Missouri, you've got to show me (political speech); *to gerrymander* (political elections), *And Bob's your uncle* (nepotism); *Queen Anne's dead* (monarchy); *John Hancock* (political assembly); *Belisha beacon* (traffic policy); *peeping Tom* (arbitrary method of government); *to rob Peter to pay Paul, soapy Sam* (religious politics); *Teddy boy/girl* (protesting against the 'Establishment'); *Uncle Tom* (racial prejudice)

HUMAN IMPERFECTION (10):

not to set the Thames on fire, to carry coals to Newcastle (unintelligence), *to pull a brodie* (foolhardiness), *to raise Cain* ([destructive] aggression), *to out-Herod Herod* (cruelty), *Walter Mitty* (day-dreaming), *smart aleck, clever dick* (would-be ingenuity), *Murphy's law* (prolonged failure), *doubting Thomas* (mistrust)

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (10):

shipshape and Bristol fashion (seafaring); *to carry coals to Newcastle* (mining); *to talk Billingsgate* (retail of fish); *to be in Queer Street* (financial problems); *tommy rot, tommy shop* (trade union); *Al at Lloyds* (marine insurance); *to be in Carey Street* (bankruptcy); *Parkinson's law, Buggins's turn* (civil service)

PUBLIC POWER, CRIME & JURISDICTION (8):

John Doe and Richard Roe, Philadelphia lawyer (court proceedings); *Lynch law* (public malpractices); *Black Maria* (arrest of criminals); *Buckley's chance* (fugitive life); *sweet Fanny Adams* (murder); *not on your Nellie!*, *to take the mickey out of someone* (underworld slang)

FAMILY LIFE & HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS (5):

Darby and Joan (marital life), *to mollycoddle* (upbringing),

to keep up with the Joneses (social rivalry), *What will Mrs Grundy say?* (social prejudice), *when Miss/Mr Right comes along* (ideal partnership)

FOLKLORE & LEGENDARY BEINGS (5):

mumbo jumbo, *Davy Jones's locker*, *by George!*, *wise men of Gotham*, *a Roland for an Oliver*

SCIENCES (2):

according to Cocker, *according to Gunter* (mathematics)

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE ASSOCIATE AREAS ABOVE

In conclusion of observations made on the above fields of activity, it has been surprising to discover that only two idioms were closely related to family life: *Darby and Joan*, and *to mollycoddle*, and that, even if this category is extended to include other human relationships, only three other phrases may be eligible: *to keep up with the Joneses*, *What will Mrs Grundy say?*, and *when Miss/Mr Right comes along*. In summary: only five per cent of the Top Hundred idiomacy allude to the home or relationships within or near the family. This result is, however, consistent with the attitudinal findings (averaging 16 per cent positively toned idioms versus 55 per cent negatively marked phrases) among the original data of 500 items). In short, the outlook of the

average citizen in the western welfare state has evolved more or less uniformly towards increasing individuality - and pursuit of personal interests - at the expense of the family and social relationships.

The other major unexpected discoveries include the large number of Scriptural and religious phrases (dealt in more detail below in VIII.6), as well as the large share of phrases related to the armed forces. The reasons for the great biblical influence will be easily revealed to the inquisitive mind aware of the predominance of the Church in the European education system since medieval times, an influence still perceptible in the British school. The reasons for the high proportion of military locutions in the general language will be attributable to the essential role of the British colonial army for the birth of the new European Empire, and, later, to the contributions of the Briton forces in both World Wars.

VIII.5. ON LITERARY VERSUS OTHER ORIGINS

While studying the various structural patterns in order to describe the proper name idiom in its natural setting without losing anything of its great diversity, inadequate attention was paid to the proper name idiom's formative process; it was not until at a much later stage that a finding came up: to a large degree the English proper name idiom has been coined in

spoken form, not in written. This observation was supported by a closer investigation into the formative developments, to the extent that these were known, behind each idiom. The result was astonishing: no more than 17 among the one hundred proper name idioms studied were found to derive from a purely literary origin, i.e. a source that could be titled and dated, and its author verified. Some additional 'semi-literary' entries accumulated from the press; yet the dating of these were much more indefinite. (Both groups are assembled under the heading 'Literature & Press' above.)

The above proportion may be partly attributable to the fact that a considerable number of expressions that at the outset seemed to go back to a literary origin, i.e. proved to be reported in literature, press or legal documents, were, on closer inspection, untraceable by any of these criteria: either no author, title or date were to be discovered in the documentation to which the idiom was assuredly ascribable (*Uncle Sam, as pleased as Punch, and Bob's your uncle* exemplifying these idioms).

This unexpected discovery will, this is now clear, account for the total classes of non-occurrence in the matrix (VIII.8.) devised to illustrate the natural domain of the English proper name idiom: if an overwhelming majority (83 per cent by force of this study) derives from non-literary origins - even a number or such literary-originated idioms will have their (uncertifiable) birth in spoken English -

then *the typical proper name idiom can be designated a colloquialism in origin*; and, indeed, quite a few start their career as particularly spoken coinages, especially as colloquial or slang phrases. The dozen or so idiomatic phrases among the Top Hundred which are designated as slang or slangish by the sources and/or the OED (*Uncle Tom, Nancy boy, not on your Nellie, and Bob's your uncle, to take the mickey out of someone, to pull a brodie, all my eye and Betty Martin, sweet Fanny Adams, gone for a burton, to be in Civvy Street, to be in Queer Street*) are in the process of gradually turning into accepted items of standard English, and another dozen or so among the latter category (*smart aleck, soapy Sam, teddy boy, tommy rot, to raise Cain, noseyparker, Lynch law, like billyo, to put on the ritz, to gerrymander, Joe Miller, Tommy Atkins*) have themselves slowly undergone similar developments from a tabooed term into one with full acceptance.

The discovery of the majority of English proper name idioms having their origin in speech rather than writing, fits in with another finding verified by the matrix anomalies (Section VIII.8.), namely that born typically in conversation they tend to lack the rich modification characteristic of written language, especially some particular patterns, as exemplified by journalism, scientific language, business reports, technical descriptions, formulations of law.

One could advance on this suggestive path and put forward the following proposition: could it be that a great many idioms have been created "on the spur of the moment", to meet the challenge of a particular situation between the speaker and the other party (another person, a group, an audience etc.), which would also account for the unusual degree and frequency of lexico-grammatical fixedness, non-compositionality and other features specific to them? If typically born in a conversational context without much premeditation (neatly illustrated by such phrases as *gerrymander*, *soapy Sam*, *Nancy boy*, *Adam's ale*, *sweet Fanny Adams*, *as poor as Job's turkey*, and *Bob's your uncle*, to put on the ritz, and a host of others), this idiosyncrasy would account for, except for their high degree of 'grammatical anomalousness', also for their low rate of modification.

The above presupposition, is not verified by any statistical evidence, but the statement made by Crystal and Davy (1969/1983: 55) that "varieties are to be found which, characteristically, have hardly any premodification or postmodification at all (eg. conversation); some are typified by complex premodification (eg. journalism and science); and others by complex postmodification (eg. legal language)". This observation would additionally cover the characteristic deficiency of modification in any proper name headwords that exceed one lexeme; in Identity Names and Place Names their non-occurrence is striking. This finding, on the other hand,

is also supported by the fact that proper names in general appear regularly per se, i.e. without modification.

If, on the other hand, more detailed and 'deeper' data on the specific properties of English idioms with a proper name constituent would be sought, namely to establish their distinctive qualities in contrast with English idioms in general, one of the most discriminating tools would be the appropriate application of the matrix created for this study.

VIII.6. ON THE CONTENT OF BIBLICAL PHRASES IN THE DATA

Another unexpected discovery to the author of this thesis was the number of proper name idioms with biblical origin or association. Although, for purposes of limitation at the outset, all biblical idiom was to be excluded from this study, the frequency of some well-established phrases made it necessary to accept the most popular, and often, not directly loaned, phrases to preserve a truthful distribution of items. 'Direct' in contrast with 'indirect' derivations refer here to those expressions that appear as such in the Bible as distinct from the latter which are, sometimes very loosely, connected with biblical characters or locations. The former group is exemplified by *doubting Thomas, the old/new Adam, to go into the land of Nod, to go to Abraham's bosom*; the latter by *the curse of Adam, as poor as Job's turkey, gone to Jericho, not to know a person from Adam, daughter of Eve*.

In addition to these clear-cut groups, there are two equally large, related, 'denominations', which could be simply called religious, the former associable with religious characters, events or locations, the latter more loosely alluding to the religious world. The former can be evidenced by *St Martin's summer, vicar of Bray, parson Adams, nosey Parker, to play the Old Harry, to turn Catherine wheels*; the latter by *soapy Sam, Joanna Southcott's box, Winchester geese, Goodman's croft*. On top of all these, there is an equally varied assembly of euphemistic phrases, which, on the surface, appear to have no association with the Bible or religion in general: *For Pete's sake, for the love of Mike, go to Halifax*. The personal names, however, stand as euphemistic 'pseudonyms' for God, or Christ, and Halifax for Hell.

In order to understand the proportion of Scriptural allusion, still astoundingly large in present-day English, this author chose to find out reasons for this 'undue biblical influence' - as seen against the highly secularized western way of life - by perusal of related works of reference. What finally cropped up is easily condensed into three quotations that, connected, reveal the chain of events.

"Many Bible phrases (...) have assumed the character of English idioms, and are often used with little or no consciousness of their origin" (Bradley, 224). "No book has had an equal influence on the English people. Apart from all

religious considerations, it gave (...) an idiom in which the deeper emotions of life could be recalled (...) and its language has so embedded itself in our national tradition that if the Bible is forgotten, a precious possession will be lost" (Evans, 230f). "The second reason for the unique position of the Bible text among translations is of course the unapproachable quality of the text of the Authorized Version. It has been praised so often, so universally, and for so long that there is no need...to do more than recall the fact" (Savory, 106).

VIII.7. ON THE ATTITUDINAL CONTENT IN PROPER NAME IDIOMS

SOME NOTES ON THE PRICIPLES OF ANNOTATION

Last Names formed on the basis of an appellative have been classified as representatives of the gender they have proved to be on grounds of information provided in the idiom compilations. In ambiguous or doubtful cases the sexual identity has been checked in various external works of reference. An overwhelming majority among Identity Names appeared to be male; as a rule, the female identity is definitely established by the title, used as a form of address: *Mrs Candour, Miss Lonelyhearts, Lady Muck, Mistress Roper*. The few cases (2/100 vs. 8/500), which leave the gender open, either of the lack of such a title or of information provided by the idiom compilation, have been

ascribed to both genders. These sporadic occurrences are listed in the chapter 'On the attitudinal content in 'male' versus 'female' idioms'.

Often, however, at least one of the idiom compilations, or also the OED, informs one of the gender in question in the characters appearing in Last Names. Occasionally, the unmarked gender of the last name in an idiom leaves the case ambiguous since no indication is readily found even in the idiom compilations. In such occurrences help is available in some external work of reference, as in the case of *rich as Fugger* (vs *rich as a Fugger). The founding father to this phrase proved to be Jacob II Fugger, who won the epithet 'the rich Fugger' during his lifetime; hence, '*rich as Fugger*' has been marked as male.

There are cases, however, in which the general view is not as clear as this: *Al at the Lloyd's* contains no reference as to its originator; after some ground work, the Lloyd's Insurance Company, originally an association of marine insurance underwriters, was found to have borrowed its name from the owner of a coffee house these agents frequented, Mr Edward Lloyd. This being not common knowledge, the idiom was marked as representing both sexes.

In cases where an idiom containing several names, whether First, Last, or Identity Names, it has scored one marking in the statistics, since otherwise it would lead to a biased view. Such cases are *every Tom, Dick and Harry; Brown,*

Jones and Robinson; John Doe and Richard Roe. Male dominance is strikingly reflected in these 'doublets' or 'triplets': this data provides no single instance an idiom with such a multiple female nomenclature; the only occurrences of such multiple representation always contain male names as complementary items: *Jack and Jill, Darby and Joan, There's no leaping from Delilah's leap into Abraham's bosom.*

A special case in its own right is exclamations. Each case in which the phrase itself is clearly negatively or positively characterized, it has been marked with the respective sign (+ or -). On the other hand, whenever it can be used, according to the commentary or examples provided for it, equally well in both appreciative and depreciative phrases expressing an emphatic stand, the item has been designated as neutral (*By Godfrey!, Upon my Sammy!, By George!, Holy Moses!*).

VIII.8. ON THE ATTITUDINAL CONTENT IN 'MALE' VERSUS 'FEMALE' IDIOMS

The share of 'male idioms' (i.e. those with a male name element) in the study material is 70 per cent, of 'female idioms' some 12 per cent, and of place name idioms the remaining 18 per cent. If we may assume that the world around us is fairly reliably reflected in the language that we use every day, then the world during the three decades from the early 1950s to the late 1970s was manifestly dominated by

male influences, at least in terms of gender-distinctive English idioms with a proper name element. The technical set-up is namely constructed in such a way as to eliminate any factors tending to bias the interpretation of data towards either gender. In the eight cases where the gender (in Last Name idioms) either referred to a family or remained for some other reason unidentified the proper name involved was then interpreted as referring to both sexes (*to keep up with the Joneses, to ride Shank's mare, to go by Walker's bus, Horne and Thorne shall make England forlorn, My name is Short, All Stuarts are not sib, The three best doctors are Dr Diet, Dr Quiet, and Dr Merryman, Do you know Dr Wright of Norwich*).

In addition to the above-mentioned heavy male dominance among the data, the attitudinal content among the highly underrepresented female idioms was even more negatively biased against women than this content was in respect with men in male idioms: 60 per cent of the former group were toned negatively, and 13 per cent positively, while the respective figures for men among male idioms were 54 and 19. This distribution reflects remarkably higher preference and appreciation of the male gender. In a summary, there is strong lexical evidence in support of the view that the latter half of the twentieth century was a period of continued male overevaluation, and, in reverse, a period of continued female underestimation. This is an undeniable tendency cropping up from the evidence.

Findings indicating this tendency cropping up from the data manifest derogatory, disparaging, even abusive, terms as being used of both sexes. Among these the most disoblging, however, are towards women, and the most laudable towards men: *Harriet Lane* and *sweet Fanny Adams* refer both to young girls who were brutally murdered and dismembered, and, finally, so as to give the matter an exquisite finishing touch, offered for dinner in the army canteen to the rank-and-file. Or so went the background story.

An overwhelming majority of female idioms picture the feminine sex as something not quite up to the male one, which idea is abundantly illustrated by examples: *Aunt Sally*, *little orphan Annie*, *Moaning Minnie*, *plain Jane*, *nervous Nellie*, *Bartholomew doll*, *Dolly bird*, *Dame Partington and her mop*, *Calamity Jane*, *Dolly Varden*. Overall, the female idioms tend to convey an idea that the typical female is someone not to be taken seriously; even the most esteemed female individuals are seen in a facetious, humorous, or even derogatory light: *Annie Oakley* stands for a punched free ticket, *Mae West* an inflatable life-jacket for the armed forces, *Duke of Exeter's daughter* the torturing rack.

In contrast, no esteemable male figure represents such disparaging ideas as the above, even if marked by a touch of jocularly: *Admirable Crichton* is in every respect what he is claimed to be, and the same applies to *Sir Garnet*, *Old Bill* and his better 'ole, *Brother Jonathan*, *Johnny-on-the-spot*,

honest Joe, Roland with his Oliver, and many others. At the greatest degree of masculine degradation, a man is seen as a Mickey's monkey, jackass, hooligan, proper Charlie, or jackanapes. If one is to employ a single phrase expressing this difference in appreciation based on gender, there are few encapsulating this division of status more aptly than There is no leaping from Delila's lap into Abraham's bosom. Even if biblical in reference, this idiom is modern in composition, and the image it conveys is succinct despite all its sententiousness.

The above attitudinal evaluation could be compressed into the following verdict: unfavourable views on the surroundings, and especially on other people, are clearly more popular than friendly ones. As to what it is that motivates such general disfavour falls to the professional field of the perceptive psychologist or sociologist, and we, as linguists, can but make 'educated guesses' at the reasons for such a reproachful outlook.

Admittedly, the past century was one of two major holocausts, which left few contemporaries unscathed, physically or mentally, but, after two generations of those who have no personal experience of war, we would expect people to have a more kindly attitude towards their fellow humans.

That this Anglo-Saxon outlook simply is not an isolated case in modern Europe is witnessed by some parallel results

from research conducted elsewhere. A corpus of 100 000 entries constituting The Basic Finnish Dictionary ('Perussanakirja') was recently investigated by Professor Harri Mantila of Oulu University, and his finding was that "There are few expressions in Finnish that would convey a kind or benevolent thought of another person". In addition, he wishes to remind us of the fact that Finnish has no equivalent for 'lady' (educated woman of refined manners) - a not so graceful cause for a parade of national virtue (Iltalehti, 9th Oct 1998, p.7).

As for 'ladies' in Last Name idioms, their underrating or disparagement, touched upon in the above, often appears veiled; in other words, softened, for instance, by a polite form of address (*Mrs Candour, Mrs Malaprop, Mrs Mop, Lady Muck, Miss Lonelyhearts*), whereby the requisite of good manners will be fulfilled, and yet there remains no doubt as to what is thought of or felt towards the target person. This same feature is, on occasion, also present in the respective terms among male idioms, but not to the same extent. Nevertheless, there is a similar tendency to camouflage the belittled personage (the disparagement indicated by the tone of the 'properized' name) under an acceptable title - for males often military - instead of an explicit derogatory stamp on a person (*Colonel Blimp, Captain Armstrong, Colonel Bogey*).

VIII.9. STRUCTURAL TYPES REPRESENTED IN THE DATA

Below are in table form presented the preliminary and final data (500 proper name idioms including the Top Hundred) constituting material for comparisons with the hundred idioms investigated in greater detail in this thesis. The classes found non-represented are rendered in bold in the matrix. In the synopsis following the matrix reasons are suggested for their mis- or non-representation.

As a key to the coding system: The first three digits classify the proper name idiom, as in closer detail explained in Section V.3. Each idiom category, as indicated by this three-digit coding at the beginning of each, is then provided with a figure at the end indicating the number of items represented in this category as follows: the first, underlined, figure stands for the number of items found among the final data of Top Hundred, followed by a number standing for the items in the original material of 500 idioms (e.g. 1.1.1 or 'First Names with premodification in Noun Phrases' found in final data: 10 items, as compared with those found in precursory material: 58 entries).

PERSON NAMES

1. **FIRST NAMES**

1.1. FIRST NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES

1.1.0. First Names without modification in NPs - 2/4

- 1.1.1. First Names with premodification in NPs - 10/58
- 1.1.2. First Names with postmodification in NPs - 1/25
- 1.1.3. First Names as premodifiers in NPs - 7/32
- 1.1.4. First Names as postmodifiers in NPs - 0/4

1.2. FIRST NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES

- 1.2.0. First Names without modification in APs - 2/5
- 1.2.1. First Names with premodification in APs: 000
- 1.2.2. First Names with postmodification in APs: 000
- 1.2.3. First Names as premodifiers in APs - 1/5
- 1.2.4. First Names as postmodifiers in APs: 000

1.3. FIRST NAMES IN ADVERB PHRASES

- 1.3.0. First Names without modification in AvPs - 0/1
- 1.3.1. First Names with premodification in AvPs: 000
- 1.3.2. First Names with postmodification in AvPs - 0/1
- 1.3.3. First Names as premodifiers in AvPs: 000
- 1.3.4. First Names as postmodifiers in AvPs: 000

1.4. FIRST NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES

- 1.4.0. First Names without modification in PPs - 2/3
- 1.4.1. First Names with premodification in PPs - 1/2
- 1.4.2. First Names with postmodification in PPs: 000
- 1.4.3. First Names as premodifiers in PPs - 1/1
- 1.4.4. First Names as postmodifiers in PPs - 1/1

1.5. FIRST NAMES IN VERB PHRASES

- 1.5.0. First Names without modification in VPs - 5/14
- 1.5.1. First Names with premodification in VPs - 0/4
- 1.5.2. First Names with postmodification in VPs: 000
- 1.5.3. First Names as premodifiers in VPs - 1/6
- 1.5.4. First Names as postmodifiers in VPs: 000

1.6. FIRST NAMES IN SENTENCES

1.6.0. First Names without modification in Ss - 1/18

1.6.1. First Names with premodification in Ss - 1/4

1.6.2. First Names with postmodification in Ss: 000

1.6.3. First Names as premodifiers in Ss - 0/2

1.6.4. First Names as postmodifiers in Ss: 000

2. LAST NAMES

2.1. LAST NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES

2.1.0. Last Names without modification in NPs - 2/11

2.1.1. Last Names with premodification in NPs - 5/21

2.1.2. Last Names with postmodification in NPs - 0/1

2.1.3. Last Names as premodifiers in NPs - 7/24

2.1.4. Last Names as postmodifiers in NPs: 000

2.2. LAST NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES

2.2.0. Last Names without modification in APs - 0/2

2.2.1. Last Names with premodification in APs - 0/1

2.2.2. Last Names with postmodification in APs: 000

2.2.3. Last Names as premodifiers in APs - 0/1

2.2.4. Last Names as postmodifiers in APs: 000

2.3. LAST NAMES IN ADVERB PHRASES

2.3.0. Last Names without modification in AvPs - 1/1

2.3.1. Last Names with premodification in AvPs: 000

2.3.2. Last Names with postmodification in AvPs: 000

2.3.3. Last Names as premodifiers in AvPs - 0/1

2.3.4. Last Names as postmodifiers in AvPs: 000

2.4. LAST NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES

- 2.4.0. Last Names without modification in PPs - 4/4
- 2.4.1. Last Names with premodification in PPs: 000
- 2.4.2. Last Names with postmodification in PPs: 000
- 2.4.3. Last Names as premodifiers in PPs: 000
- 2.4.4. Last Names as postmodifiers in PPs: 000

2.5. LAST NAMES IN VERB PHRASES

- 2.5.0. Last Names without modification in VPs - 2/6
- 2.5.1. Last Names with premodification in VPs - 0/2
- 2.5.2. Last Names with postmodification in VPs: 000
- 2.5.3. Last Names as premodifiers in VPs - 4/7
- 2.5.4. Last Names as postmodifiers in VPs - 1/1

2.6. LAST NAMES IN SENTENCES

- 2.6.0. Last Names without modification in Ss - 1/10
- 2.6.1. Last Names with premodification in Ss - 2/6
- 2.6.2. Last Names with postmodification in Ss - 0/1
- 2.6.3. Last Names as premodifiers in Ss: 000
- 2.6.4. Last Names as postmodifiers in Ss: 000

3. IDENTITY NAMES

3.1. IDENTITY NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES

- 3.1.0. Identity Names without modification in NPs - 12/84
- 3.1.1. Identity Names with premodification in NPs - 2/7
- 3.1.2. Identity Names with postmodification in NPs: 000
- 3.1.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in NPs - 2/9
- 3.1.4. Identity Names as postmodifiers in NPs: 000

3.2. IDENTITY NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES

- 3.2.0. Identity Names without modification in APs - 0/2
- 3.2.1. Identity Names with premodification in APs: 000
- 3.2.2. Identity Names with postmodification in APs: 000

- 3.2.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in APs: 000
- 3.2.4. Identity Names as postmodifiers in APs: 000
- 3.3. IDENTITY NAMES IN ADVERB PHRASES
 - 3.3.0. Identity Names without modification in AvPs: 000
 - 3.3.1. Identity Names with premodification in AvPs: 000
 - 3.3.2. Identity Names with postmodification in AvPs: 000
 - 3.3.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in AvPs: 000
 - 3.3.4. Identity Names as postmodifiers in AvPs: 000
- 3.4. IDENTITY NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES
 - 3.4.0. Identity Names without modification in PPs: 000
 - 3.4.1. Identity Names with premodification in PPs - 0/1
 - 3.4.2. Identity Names with postmodification in PPs: 000
 - 3.4.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in PPs: 000
 - 3.4.4. Identity Names as postmodifiers in PPs: 000
- 3.5. IDENTITY NAMES IN VERB PHRASES
 - 3.5.0. Identity Names without modification in VPs - 0/8
 - 3.5.1. Identity Names with premodification in VPs - 0/2
 - 3.5.2. Identity Names with postmodification in VPs: 000
 - 3.5.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in VPs - 0/2
 - 3.5.4. Identity Names as postmodifiers in VPS: 000
- 3.6. IDENTITY NAMES IN SENTENCES
 - 3.6.0. Identity Names without modification in Ss - 1/1
 - 3.6.1. Identity Names with premodification in Ss: 000
 - 3.6.2. Identity Names with postmodification in Ss: 000
 - 3.6.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in Ss - 0/1
 - 3.6.4. Identity Names as postmodifiers in Ss: 000

4. PLACE NAMES

4.1. PLACE NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES

4.1.0. Place Names without modification in NPs - 0/3

4.1.1. Place Names with premodification in NPs - 0/1

4.1.2. Place Names with postmodification in NPs: 000

4.1.3. Place Names as premodifiers in NPs - 2/19

4.1.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in NPs - 2/10

4.2. PLACE NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES

4.2.0. Place Names without modification in APs: 000

4.2.1. Place Names with premodification in APs: 000

4.2.2. Place Names with postmodification in APs: 000

4.2.3. Place Names as premodifiers in APs - 0/2

4.2.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in APs: 000

4.3. PLACE NAMES IN ADVERB PHRASES

4.3.0. Place Names without modification in AvPs - 1/6

4.3.1. Place Names with premodification in AvPs: 000

4.3.2. Place Names with postmodification in AvPs: 000

4.3.3. Place Names as premodifiers in AvPs - 1/2

4.3.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in AvPs: 000

4.4. PLACE NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES

4.4.0 Place Names without modification in PPs - 0/1

4.4.1. Place Names with premodification in PPs: 000

4.4.2. Place Names with postmodification in PPs: 000

4.4.3. Place Names as premodifiers in PPs - 0/1

4.4.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in PPs - 0/1

4.5. PLACE NAMES IN VERB PHRASES

4.5.0. Place Names without modification in VPs - 8/25

4.5.1. Place Names with premodification in VPs: 000

4.5.2. Place Names with postmodification in VPs: 000

4.5.3. Place Names as premodifiers in VPs - 3/6

4.5.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in VPs - 0/2

4.6. PLACE NAMES IN SENTENCES

4.6.0. Place Names without modification in Ss - 1/12

4.6.1. Place Names with premodification in Ss: 000

4.6.2. Place Names with postmodification in Ss: 000

4.6.3. Place Names as premodifiers in Ss - 0/1

4.6.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in Ss - 0/1

OBSERVATIONS ON MATRIX ANOMALIES

In broad outline the representation of certain structural idiom types in the data can summed up as follows.

When tested against the original reserve of 500 proper name idioms, this cross-tabulation appears to work remarkably well for the First Name idioms: all thus postulated subclasses emerge. For LNs, the picture alters in that in class 4 (LNs as postmodifiers) no items appear. With Identity Names, a new distinct feature crops up, neither cases with LNs as postmodifiers, nor ones being postmodified, manifest themselves. And finally, Place Names - admittedly the scantiest class to start with - have no cases of postmodification, but contain yet postmodifier-PlaNs approximately as frequently as their most abundant class, PlaNs as premodifiers. Most of the former are built around the of-genitive, a formation typifying the place names, exemplified by the proverbial *white cliffs of Dover*.

The tiniest phrase groups of all six, Adjective Phrases, Adverb Phrases, and Preposition Phrases, are also the major 'losers' of subclasses: altogether 38 subclasses out of the total potential of 60 fail to appear, and there most often (as seen against the four main classes FNs, LNs, INs, and PlaNs) in the subclasses of name with post-modification, and name as postmodifier: the same general tendency as came out for the noun phrases.

This overall feature of names with postmodification and names themselves as postmodifiers being the scantiest set (in terms of frequency of appearance) among the five subclasses is further emphasized by findings in the last two phrase groups (Verb Phrases and Sentences). Once more, the two classes (names with postmodification, and names as postmodifiers) are represented by single, or mostly, non-existent cases.

This phenomenon might be, in summary, perhaps accounted by reasons of simplicity vs. complexity: there may have arisen and there may arise idioms instancing any of these presently absent structures, but, being too 'complicated' in terms of sound production and too long to be caught in immediate memory, they have not survived (will not survive) spontaneous conversation. Spontaneity and colloquial expression are, after all, the midwives helping to deliver the typical English idiom into the world.

Even if it has now become clear that the cross-tabulation, devised particularly for this study, and constituting one of its novel features in the form of tabular presentation, appears to function in an exemplary fashion exclusively for one main class, the noun phrase, it is decidedly upheld, because of its value for this particular group, which is by far the most frequent among both the Top Hundred and the Five-Hundred (85 per cent and 62.5 per cent, respectively), constituting thus by far the largest individual set of proper name idioms in the whole material.

Even this relatively limited examination suffices to justify the postulation that the configuration of proper name idioms with the special feature of modification does bring forth some noteworthy characteristics among the rich diversity of noun phrase-form proper name English idiom. The scope of this general study being, however, rather limited by the focus on the information value of the etymological data contained in the consulted idiom dictionaries, these special features might constitute the theme and subject for some further investigation.

IX. CONCLUSION

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

IX.1. FINDINGS IN A SUMMARY

Presenting findings from both the idiom compilations and the OED condensed in numerical values the following features emerged. There was a large variation in the information value. Examined against the mean grade of 2, which really was the average grade or mean value on the crude gradation chosen for the comparisons, certain findings emerged suggesting that the grading scale was appropriate. This value appeared to function as a reliable means of division, resulting into three groups of equal extension. In the following overview each compilation is ranked - from the lowest grade towards the highest - and its average grade is shown in parentheses.

Those below the mean value were indeed the least informative of sources in any respect: their presentations seldom extended beyond defining the idiom: OxfId (1.2), ChambId (1.3), LongId (1.5). In other words, these were dictionaries focusing on listing a fair number of idioms and sufficing to paraphrase each. The middle group, i.e. those amounting to the mean grade, were those providing some additional details to mere definitions, mostly some sort of derivation and possibly some other background data: CollId (2.1), R&S (2.2), M&M (2.3), and Noble (2.3). And, finally,

the top class with versatile information, averaged from grade 2.5 upwards, defining, deriving, and usually also 'backlighting' the idiom from various perspectives: Brewer (2.5), Hunt (2.5) and Funk (2.7). Surprisingly, the compilation providing the most eccentric and far-fetched - to say the least - derivations also proved to be the most fruitful.

In summary, the average idiom compilation, whether a true dictionary or an assembly of idioms collected from a certain viewpoint, is, as a rule, one aiming at holding to the established - and hence, well-known - facts; in other words, the typical idiom collection is likely to enhance the reader's conception of some aspects among individual idioms, but is equally likely to leave the inquisitive (etymologically-minded) reader rather dissatisfied on the whole: the mean grade attained by the ten idiom compilations was 2.06. Even if some among the more comprehensive collections, say OxfId and LongId, may be found to cover a respectable number of items, this will occur at the expense of background data; they remain, in other words, mere idiom dictionaries instead of true works of reference, in this study typified by the best three idiom collections quoted above. The average score for the best presentations for each proper name idiom among the ten source compilations was 2.64, while the OED reached the mean value of 2.47: a margin not so

drastic, but all the more meaningful in this particular context.

Among other things that this investigation taught to its conductor, is the observation that dating, even if traceable to an accurate 'birth date' - such as the publication of a book, release of a film, first performance of an opera, stage show, or song, delivery of speech - the actual coming into its own, or establishing itself, of an idiom is seldom fixable to an accurate year (there are *very few* instances of an exact date).

This finding appears somewhat surprising in the face of the fact that there *is* an exact time point of coming into existence for each such occurrence. The observation might be accountable by another apparent fact: very few people interested in compiling idiom dictionaries (or dictionaries on the whole) will be able to make contact with the persons who were involved in the birth of an idiom, and even less so, when several years or even decades have passed since the actual occurrence. Individuals with such an inquisitive, linguistic turn of mind are perhaps not such an especially frequent phenomenon as to make headlines when they are planning a new dictionary or compilation, unless they decidedly and determinately seek such communication or correspondence, as was the case with the creation of the Oxford English Dictionary.

Be that as it may, evidence corroborating this tendency into a fact accumulated in the process of the study, and could be neatly summarized in the following: "It is comparatively seldom that a word can be proved to have been used for the first time by a particular author, but it can be often shown that a writer has brought a word into general use, or that a current sense of a word is derived from a literary allusion". These were the words of one of the best authorities in the field, Henry Bradley (1964:217), who, after the death of James Murray, became one of the editors-in-chief to the New Oxford Dictionary, or the first edition (1928) of what later became the Oxford English Dictionary.

On the other hand, observations on the dating of these proper name idioms in the sources, and even more so in the OED, have suggested that the typical idiom demands a span of some to several years first to grow popular in some part of the country (oftenmost its 'birth place'), and then a decade or several decades to establish itself throughout the nation. This very rough rule of thumb has emerged from the material studied, and would seem rather appropriate as viewed against the period of the twentieth century terminating in the seventies (the latest recorded 'birth date - in England - of the idioms in this selection was 1977).

Today, in the age of the mobile telephone, the electronic mail, and the internet, the period from the birth of an idiom until its full 'settlement' may be a matter of

years, rather than decades. Half a century ago, with a more leisurely pace of living and communications, the process of an idiom finding its way into common coin would have taken much longer than at present. In our time, the utterances occurring on the television or the internet, and the lyrics of a hit track on a recent compact disc of a world-famous music group may be the possession of millions of consumers in a matter of few moments.

In addition to aspects of a phrase becoming established, which appeared to be a surprisingly time-consuming process, other unexpected findings emerged. As noted earlier, among the most astonishing discoveries on the pages of the OED was to discover that the best among these generally very modest and 'rank-and-file' compilations **could** excel the OED editors in 73 cases versus 55 (Category 3) in that their overall coverage on the majority of English proper name idioms was more uniform and had a better 'spread'. To paraphrase: for seven idioms out of each ten the best sources reached the best level, while the OED attained it only in five and a half cases out of ten.

Yet the above finding does not provide an undistorted picture evidencing "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth", for the reader of this investigation will remember that also the 'opposite end' of gradation was not that unambiguous. Namely, even if the OED editors at times seem to falter (Category 1, accompanied by a number of

examples also in Category 2), they are, "when they so will", capable of emerging with a competent performance as concerns all the three criteria used for assessment, not only dating the idioms - their strongest asset for the present study - as a rule, better than any single source alone, but also, and in particular, in furnishing illustrating quotes of recorded use as well as relevant complementary information on the background of the idiom.

To sum up these findings: inevitably, the OED has its imperfections, even failures, proving its vulnerability; to balance this inadequacy, this treasure of English can also excel any other work of reference in its accurate, factual and reliable information.

IX.2. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

It would be interesting to establish to which degree of similarity or difference another, more thorough and specialized, survey would yield on more modern material consisting mainly of items from, say, the three decades from 1970 until the turn of the millennium. Or alternatively, even if covering the same span as the present study, having its weigh or focus on some different area(s), for instance, validating only British or American idioms, idioms with either person or place name, idioms current in a particular decade, and so forth.

Another fruitful and interesting aspect would be offered by an investigation into the rate of transfer of such proper name idioms from the United States to Britain, accounting for the reasons for their ready adoption and/or for more or less rigorous resistance. Or also, a thorough comparison of lexical distinctions, or the subject matter provided by the variants of both idiomacies.

Yet another angle would be opened for a study into the average life span of PN idioms, whether domestic or borrowed, and, of course, find reasons for their long- or short-livedness, and so on. More in line with currently fashionable areas of emphasis for scholarly work could be to concentrate on comparing various issues between male and female proper name idioms, for instance the distinct value differentiation to be found between them, as also suggested by this study. This, in fact, was at the outset one of the points of interest worth investigating into, until the volume of research work these issues would entail was found to extend beyond the scope of this type of general study.

On the ground of the research conducted for this pro gradu thesis, almost unlimited vistas and ways of presenting the issue appear to abound in the field, only awaiting scholarly research: PN idioms confined to a geographical, social, etc. entity, for instance consisting of British first names, Irish place names, American identity names, names of non-British or non-American origin, or proper name idioms to

be found in some specialized field, such as biblical texts, the jargon of the military, the press, world politics, the sports, the arts, the sciences.

Another engaging topic could be to examine the highly special field of slang and taboo terms, for which there is no lack of material; The Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English compiled by Eric Partridge and edited by Paul Beale, for instance, would amply provide it for a number of kind of studies, whether originating in rhyming slang or other types of 'unconventional' language.

One of the most practical and also useful themes for a comparative study would naturally be certain aspects in these British and/or American proper name idioms and their representations in Finnish, for which Suomalainen fraasisanakirja (A Dictionary of Finnish Phrases), edited by Sakari Virkkunen, will easily provide several hundreds of loan translations or near equivalents. The present study, incidentally, brought forth few such calques: *Uncle Sam* ('Setä Samuli'), and *Black Maria*, which will probably have been brought to Finland by Swedish sailors before the native ones, since Swedish also uses 'svarta maja', which is closer in form to our native 'musta(-)maiija'. There are a handful of others, like *hooligan* ('huligaani'), *jerrycan* ('jerrykannu'), *Murphy's law* ('Murphyn laki'), *Occam's razor* ('Occamin partaveitsi') *Sparks* ('Kipinä'), *Kilroy was here* ('K.

oli/kävi täällä'), *Elementary, dear Watson* ('Alkeellista, hyvä Watson').

The only proper name idiom transferred from Finnish into English (through the mediation of British journalists reporting on the Winter War) is probably *Molotov's cocktail* (cf. *Suomalainen fraasisanakirja*, p.205).

There are a number of other, especially biblical or biblically related PN idioms replicating the English phrase, but their transfer into Finnish is equally probable via German or Swedish: 'uusi/vanha aatami' (*the new/old Adam*), 'Eevan tyttäret' (*the daughters of Eve*), 'epäilevä tuomas', (*doubting Thomas*), Other variants coming close, or within the range of resemblance, at the least, to the original are instanced by 'helppoheikki' (*cheap jack*), 'lynkkaus' (*Lynch law*), 'Hölmölän viisaat päät' (*the wise men of Gotham* - an ethnographic phenomenon which appears to be common to several parts of Europe), 'Elon laskuopin mukaan' (*according to Cocker/Gunther*), 'mennä apostolin kyydillä' (*to go by Walker's bus*), 'lähettää noutamaan Koivumäen herraa' (*to send one to Birchin Lane*), 'nauraa kuin Hangon keksi' (*to grin like a Cheshire cat*), 'olla (runsaasti) kuin Vilkkilässä kissoja' (*to fight like Kilkenny cats*).

Through this investigation, ample material is available for any subsequent study, aiming at, for instance, finding reasons for the rather varied mechanisms whereby proper name idioms are created, and, beyond that, finding reasons for why

certain productive mechanisms are predominant, while certain others are inoperative. One of the most intriguing fields for such research could be proper names in verb phrases, where the possibilities of coining a proper name idiom appear most varied, with instances from *standing Sam*, and *raising Cain* to *mollycoddling* and *gerrymandering*, and even *boxing and coxing*.

By way of a suggestion cropped up in the process of studying proper name idioms, a wealth of absorbing topics for rewarding research await any linguist captivated by idioms. Against the large structural variety, it strikes the writer of this study as a somewhat peculiar finding that, for instance, no modifying element of any kind is allowed a Place Name in the Verb Phrase; **to miss the white cliffs of Dover* is a perfectly acceptable phrase in English, but, on the evidence of this investigation, there is no popular English proper name idiom structured according to this simple and straightforward pattern. The task of unravelling why this should be so, could provide an arresting research issue for anyone seriously interested in the English idiom. This, and other particulars like it, remains, however, a challenge to be met in another study.

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APPENDIX 1: THE INFORMATION VALUE OF EACH IDIOM IN THE SOURCES

ITEM	Brewer	ChambId	CollId	Funk	Hunt	LongId	M&M	Noble	OxfId	R&S	AVERAGE
darby and joan	3	2	3			1		3	1	3	2,3
tom, dick & harry	2	1	2			1		2	1		1,5
smart alec(k)	1	1				0			0		0,5
merry-andrew	3							3			3,0
clever dick	0					0			0		0,0
black maria	3			3	2			3		2	2,6
aunt sally	2					2			1		1,7
soapy sam	3				3		3	3			3,0
uncle sam	3	3			1			1		3	2,2
doubting thomas	2	2	2		1	2	2	2	2		1,9
peeping tom	3	3		3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2,8
uncle tom	3					3					3,0
alice in wonderland	3					3					3,0
adam's ale	1	0			1	1		1		1	0,8
king charles's head	3		2		2	3			3		2,6
st martin's summer	2				2			2			2,0
nancy (boy)	3				3	1					2,3
ted(dy boy/girl)	3						1	2		2	2,0
tommy rot	2		0							2	1,3
(as) happy as larry	3					0			0		1,0
(as) pleased as punch	3	1	1	0		3			0		1,3
as poor as job's turkey	3			3							3,0
by george	2					1					1,5
not on your nellie	2	2				1			0		1,3
a roland for an oliver	2		1		3						2,0
for pete's sake	1					0			0		0,3

for the love of mike	0	0				1			1		0,5
not to know one from adam		1	1	2		1			0		1,0
(and) bob's your uncle	3					0			0	3	1,5
to raise cain	3	0	1	3	1	1	3		2		1,8
to outhrod herod	2		3			3			3		2,8
to take the mickey out of someone	0	0				2			0	1	0,6
to mollycoddle	0		1							3	1,3
to rob peter to pay paul	3	2	3	3		1				1	2,2
queen anne's dead	2		3						0	2	1,8
box and cox	3	1			3				0		1,8
heath robinson	3				3					3	3,0
colonel blimp	3					3		2	3	2	2,6
admirable crichton	3				2		3				2,7
dr jekyll & mr hyde	3	2			3	3			3	3	2,8
(gay) Lothario	3		3		3	3		3		3	3,0
the real mccoy	3	0	3	3		3			0	3	2,1
nosey parker	3	0	0		3	0				2	1,3
belisha beacon	3						3	3			3,0
buckley's chance	3									2	2,5
buggins's turn		1							2		1,5
hobson's choice	3	2	3	3	3	2	3		2	1	2,4
lynch law	3				3					3	3,0
murphy's law										3	3,0
parkinson's law	3									3	3,0
like billyo	3								0	3	2,0
according to cocker	3				3					1	2,3
according to gunther	3				3					3	3,0
according to hoyle	3			3	3		2				2,8
A1 at lloyd's	2		2			2				2	2,0
to pull a brodie	2			3						2	2,3

to be in burke	3				3						3,0
to keep up with the joneses	3	3				0	3				2,3
kilroy was here	3									3	3,0
to put on the ritz	2					1					1,5
what will mrs grundy say	3		3		3	2		1	2	3	2,4
when miss right comes along		0				2			2		1,3
to gerrymander	3				3		2			3	2,8
to ride shank's mare	1	1	2	2		1	2	1	0	1	1,2
to lead a life of reilly	3	0		3		0			0	1	1,2
(all) my eye (& betty martin)	2		2			0			0	1	1,0
joe miller	3				3			2		1	2,3
john bull	3		3		3			3	0	2	2,3
john doe & richard roe	3							2		1	2,0
john hancock	3						2			2	2,3
mumbo jumbo	3									2	2,5
namby-pamby	3		3	3	3			3		3	3,0
paul pry	3		3		3			2	2	3	2,7
pooh bah	2				3			1			2,0
rip van winkle	3				3				2		2,7
tommy (atkins)	3		2		1			3	1	3	2,2
(walter) mitty		2				3			3	2	2,5
(sweet) fanny adams	3					0			2	2	1,8
(the real) simon pure	3		3	3	3			3	2		2,8
davy jones's locker	2	2				0	3	1	1	2	1,6
tom tiddler's ground	2								2		2,0
before you could say jack robinson	2	0	2	1		0	2		0	2	1,1
bronx cheer				3					1		2,0
philadelphia lawyer				3						3	3,0
the black hole of calcutta	3					3		3	3		3,0
the wise men of gotham	2						2				2,0

gone for a burton	3	3	2			2			1	3	2,3
(all) shipshape & bristol fashion	3	1	2			2			1		1,8
to talk billingsgate	2		2					3			2,3
to be in carey street	2		2								2,0
(to be in) civvy street	2					2			2		2,0
to send (one) to coventry	2	2	3	3		1				1	2,0
to live in grub street	2	1					1	2			1,5
to be/come from missouri	3			3						2	2,7
to carry coals to newcastle	1	2	3	3		1				1	1,8
to be in queer street	1		2			1				1	1,3
(not) to set the thames on fire	2		0	2		0			0	1	0,8
to (have) kiss(ed) the blarney stone	3		2			1	3		2	3	2,3
to grin like a cheshire cat	3	2	3	3		3			3		2,8
to fight like Kilkenny cats	3		3	3		2			1		2,4
FREQUENCIES	93	33	38	24	33	53	18	28	50	54	
PERCENTAGES	93 %	33 %	38 %	24 %	33 %	53 %	18 %	28 %	50 %	54 %	
AVERAGE TOTAL	2,5	1,3	2,1	2,7	2,5	1,5	2,3	2,3	1,2	2,2	

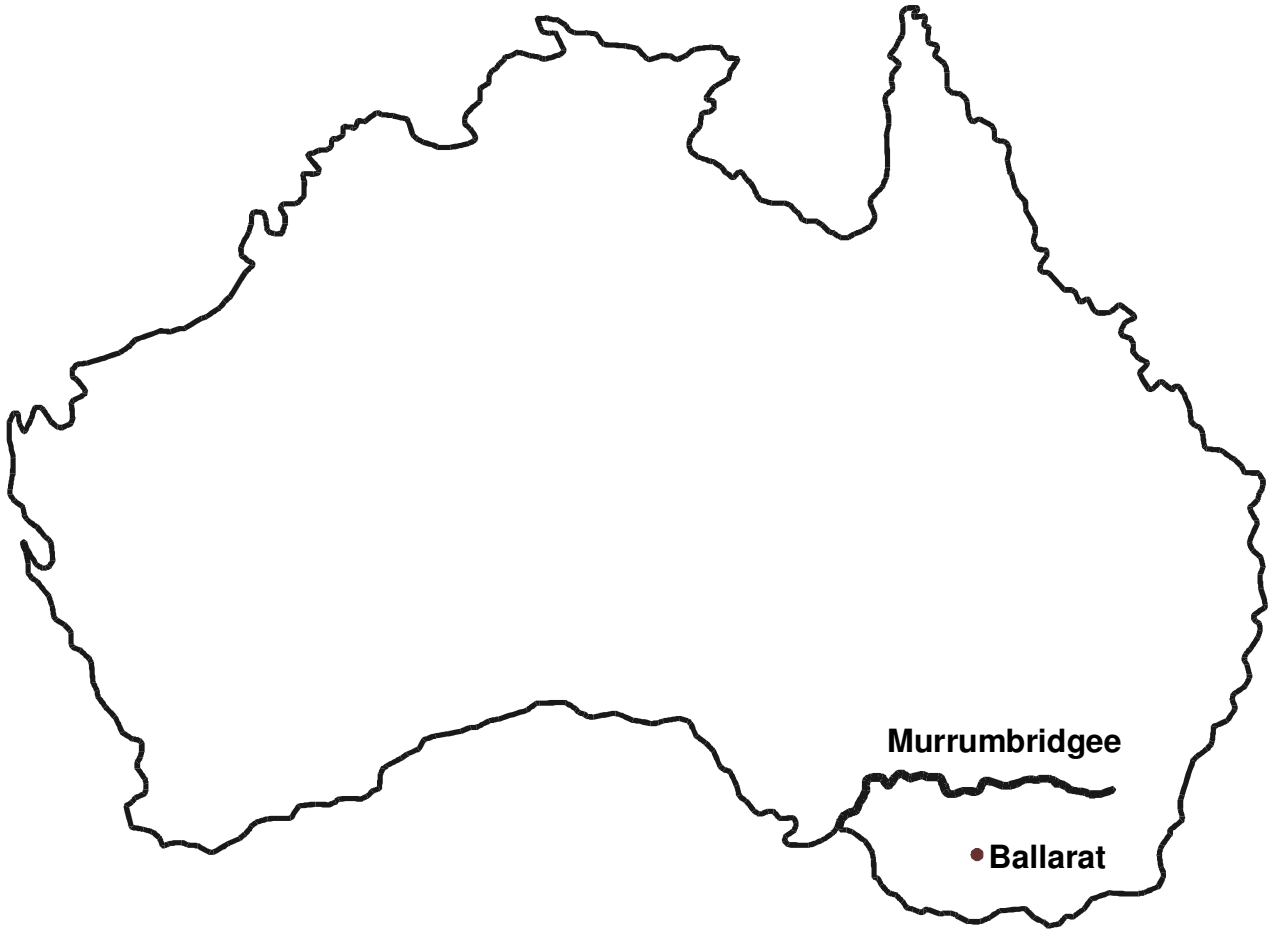
APPENDIX 2: LOCATIONS OF PLACE NAME IDIOMS IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND



APPENDIX 2: LOCATIONS OF PLACE NAME IDIOMS IN THE USA



APPENDIX 2: LOCATIONS OF PLACE NAME IDIOMS IN AUSTRALIA



APPENDIX 3: THE DATA CROSS-TABULATED

Below is the classification of original source material (the Five Hundred) using the cross-tabulation method explained in Section V.3. The final selection (the Top Hundred), from which the etymological analysis is carried out, is underlined in this listing. The coding system explained in detail in Section V.3 specifies each idiom on account of its name class (first digit), phrase type (second digit), and mode of modification (third digit) between 1.1.0 and 4.6.4.

For First Names, and also Last Names where viable, this ordering system also provides information on the quality of premodification in the following way: a) stands for a **title** (i.e. a formal way of address, whether of marital status (*Miss Right*), family relationship (*Aunt Sally*), religious (*Friar Rush*) or aristocratic order (*Sir Garnet*), b) represents a **noun** or **pronoun** (*every man jack*), c) an **adjective** (*clever dick*). The above subgradation was aimed at further enhancing the descriptive power of the newly created classification system as applied to First Names in Noun Phrases, in particular, which is by the richest class. This subclassification also serves as an additional principle for the further ordering of Last Name idioms whenever such a premodifying element is attached.

In addition, in the below tabulation, the uninflected form is always listed before the inflected; i.e. the nominative case, being the basic form, precedes the genitive form when both are present. The above outlined classification is also aimed at further enhancing the descriptive power inherent in the general classification of First Name and Last Name idioms; it is also shown in conjunction with Identity Names, wherever applicable. The figures after each heading indicate the number of entries among the Top Hundred versus the Five Hundred).

This listing also includes a label on the country that the idiom refers to, and all items not labelled as 'IRE' (Ireland), 'US' (United States), or 'AUS' (Australia) are implied as referring to Britain. The gender expressed (occasionally implied) by each idiom (an 'M' for masculine, and an 'F' for feminine) is marked at the end of the idiom. Where both sexes are denoted, this is indicated by an 'MF'.

The final figure accompanied by an 'm' (in parentheses) demonstrates the number of entries for the gender(s) in the following way: '1m' stands for one mark in the attitudinal chart for *either male or female* as indicated by the preceding gender mark, and '2m' for one mark for *each gender* (as

indicated by the symbol 'MF' in bold). This is a means of preventing any undue bias for either sex.

Where several names of the same gender appear within a single idiom, only one entry is made into the attitudinal chart. The attitudinal content of each proper name idiom, as illustrated by the marks + (positive), - (negative), n (neutral), is displayed immediately after the gender marking.

PERSON NAMES [82/407]

1. **FIRST NAMES [36/190]**

1.1. FIRST NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES [20/123]

1.1.0 First Names without modification in NPs (2/4)

Darby & Joan **MF**+(2m)

Jack & Jill **MF**n(2m)

Tom & Jerry 2M+(1m)

Tom, Dick & Harry 3Mn(1m)

1.1.1 First Names with premodification in NPs (10/58)

1.1.1.a FNs modified by title (3/18)

Mister Charlie M-

Brother Chip Mn

My aunt Fanny! F-

all Sir Garnet M+

Cousin Jack Mn

Aunt Jane F-

Aunt Jemima F- [US]

Brother Jonathan M+ [US]

Cousin Michael M-

Miss Molly F-

Miss Nancy F-

Uncle Remus M+ [US]

Friar Rush M-

Aunt Sally F-

Uncle Sam Mn [US]

Aunt Tabby F- [US]

Aunt Thomasina F- [US]

Uncle Tom M- [US]

1.1.1.b FNs modified by noun/pronoun (0/11)

Hill-Billy M- [US]

Champagne Charlie M-

tail-end Charlie M-
 man/girl Friday **MF**+(2m)
 Alibi Ike M- [US]
 every man jack (of them) M-
 Union Jack Mn
 Calamity Jane F- [US]
 Crow Jim M- [US]
 G.I.Joe Mn [US]
 stage-door Johnny M- [US]

1.1.1.c FNs modified by adjective (7/29)

the old/offending Adam M-
 the new/second Adam M+
smart aleck M- [US]
merry-andrew M-
 little orphan Annie F-
 Old Bill (& his better 'ole) M+
 Puffing Billy Mn
 Silly Billy/silly billy M-
 proper/right Charley/Charlie M-
clever dick M-
 Great Godfrey! Mn [US]
 flash Harry M-
 Old Harry M-
 cheap jack M-
 plain Jane F-
 holy Joe M- [US]
 honest Joe M+ [US]
Black Maria Fn [US]
 little Mary Fn
 Moaning Minnie F-
 Holy Moses! Mn [US]
 nervous Nellie F-
 nice Nelly/Nellie F+
 Old Nick Mn
soapy Sam M-
 simple Simon M-
doubting Thomas M-
peeping Tom M-
 little Willie Mn

1.1.2 First Names with postmodification in NPs (1/25)

jack-in-the-box M-
 jack-in-the-cellar M-
 jack-in-the-green Mn
 jack-o'lantern M-
 jack-o'the clock Mn
 jack-in-the-basket Mn
 Jack-at-a-pinch M+

Jack-a-dreams M-
 Jack-a-Lent M-
 Jack among the maids M+
 Jack in office M-
 Jack of all trades (& master of none) M-
 Jack of both sides M-
 Jack out of office M-
 jackanapes M-
 jackass M-
 jackdaw M-
 Jane-of-apes F-
 John-a-Dreams M-
 John-a-Droynes M-
 Johnny-come-lately M-
 Johnny-on-the-spot M+
Alice in Wonderland F-
 tam-o'-shanter Mn
 Tom o'Bedlam M-

1.1.3. First Names as premodifiers in NPs (7/32)

Abra(ha)m man/cove M-
 Bartholomew doll F-
 Dolly bird F-
 Jack system M-
 jerrycan/jerrican Mn
 Jerry-shop M-
Nancy boy F-
 Paddy wagon M- [IRE]
 Peter principle M-
 Peterman Mn
Ted(dy) (boy/girl) **MF**-(2m)
 teddy-bear Mn [US]
 Tomboy/tomboy Mn
 tomcat M-
Tommy rot/tommyrot M-
Tommy shop M-
 Wendy house Fn
Adam's ale Mn
 Adam's profession Mn
 Queen Anne's fan F-
King Charles's head M-
 only pretty Fanny's way F-
 St Francis's distemper M-
 Job's pound M-
 St Luke's summer M+
 Maggie's drawers F- [US]
St Martin's summer M+
 Mickey's monkey M- [IRE]
 St Nicholas's clerk M-
 Paddy's mare M- [IRE]

Reynard's globe of glass M-
Robert's men M-

1.1.4. First Names as postmodifiers in NPs (0/4)

the curse of Adam M-
daughter of Eve Fn
praise from Sir Hubert M-
president of the Jack Club M-

1.2. FIRST NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES [3/10]

1.2.0 First Names without modification in APs (2/5)

as old as Adam Mn
drunk as Chloe F-
(as) happy as Larry M+ [AUS]
lazy as Lawrence M-
(as) pleased as Punch M+

1.2.3 First Names as premodifiers in APs (1/5)

Martin drunk M-
drunk as Davy's sow M-
as poor as Job's turkey M- [US]
lazy as Lawrence's dog M-
as light as St Luke's bird M-

1.3. FIRST NAMES IN ADVERB PHRASES [0/2]

1.3.0 First Names without modification in AvPs (0/1)

like Hamlet without the Prince (of Denmark) M-

1.3.2 First Names with postmodification in AvPs (0/1)

more hide than Jessie at the Zoo F-

1.4. FIRST NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES [5/7]

1.4.0 First Names without modification in PPs (2/3)

By George! Mn
Not for Joe! Mn
A Roland for an Oliver! 2M+(1m)

1.4.1 First Names with premodification in PPs (1/2)

Not on your Nelly/Nellie! F-
Upon my Sammy! Mn

1.4.3 First Names as premodifiers in PPs (1/1)

For Pete's sake! M-

1.4.4 First Names as postmodifiers in PPs (1/1)

For the love of Mike! M-

1.5. FIRST NAMES IN VERB PHRASES [6/24]

1.5.0 First Names without modification in VPs (5/14)

to sham Abraham M-
not to know (a person) from Adam M-
to raise Cain M- [US]
to put up one's dukes Mn
to box Harry M-
to out-Herod Herod M-
to play the Jack M-
to outjudas Judas M-
to waltz matilda Mn [AUS]
to take the mick(e)y out of a person M-
to outnapoleon Napoleon M-
to die like Roland M-
to stand Sam M+ [US]
to rob Peter to pay Paul 2M-(1m)

1.5.1. First Names with premodification in VPs (0/4)

to ride abroad with St George, but at home with St Michael 2M-(1m)
to dine with Sir Humphrey M-
to consult brother Jonathan M+ [US]
to play the Old Harry M-

1.5.3. First Names as premodifiers in VPs (1/6)

to turn Catherine wheels F-
to mollycoddle F-
to go to Abraham's bosom M+
to braid St Catherine's tresses F-
(to be hung) higher than Gilderoy's kite M-
to be in Hob's pound M-

1.6. FIRST NAMES IN SENTENCES [2/24]

1.6.0. First Names without modification in Sentences (1/18)

(And) Bob's your uncle. M+
 If you aren't a good boy, Boney will catch you. M-
 Nice one, Cyril! M+
 Oh mother, look at Dick! M-
 Jack is as good as his master. Mn
 I'm allright, Jack. M-
 All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Mn
 Pull up the ladder, Jack, I'm inboard. M-
 Jack will never be a gentleman. M-
 Not tonight, Josephine. F-
 We're in Meredith. Mn
 Don't 'Now Norah' me! F- [US]
 Nunky pays for all. M+ [US]
 Just growed, like Topsy. Fn [US]
 If not Bran, it's Bran's brother. Mn
 Every Jack shall have his Jill. **MF**n(2m)
 A good Jack makes a good Jill. **MF**+(2m)
 Ilka Jeanie has her Jockey. **FM**n(2m)

1.6.1 First Names with premodification in Sentences (1/4)

Queen Anne's dead. F-
 When St George goes on horseback, St Yves goes on foot. 2Mn(1m)
 He's a silly Johnny. M-
 It's even(s) Stephen(s). Mn

1.6.3. First Names as premodifiers in Sentences (0/2)

There's no leaping from Delila's lap into Abraham's bosom. **F**-
M+(2m)
 You wear Hector's cloak. M-

2. LAST NAMES [29/100]2.1. LAST NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES [14/57]2.1.0. Last Names without modification in NPs (2/11)

Box and Cox 2Mn(1m)
 Brown, Jones & Robinson 3Mn(1m)
 Drawcansir M-
Heath Robinson M-
 hoodlum M- [US]
 hooligan M-
 Lovelace M-
 Marplot M-
 Panjadrum M-
 Tadpoles & Tapers 2M-(1m)

Tweedledum & Tweedledee 2M-(1m)

2.1.1. Last Names with premodification in NPs (5/21)

2.1.1.a Last Names premodified by title (2/13)

Parson Adams M+
 Captain Armstrong M-
(Colonel) Blimp M-
 Colonel Bogey & his march M- [US]
 Mrs Candour F-
 Little Lord Fauntleroy M+ [US]
Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde 2M-(1m)
Miss/Mr Lonelyhearts **FM**-(2m)
 Mrs Malaprop F-
 Mrs Mop F-
 Lord/Lady Muck **MF**-(2m)
 Dame Partington & her mop F-
 Mistress Roper F-

2.1.1.b Last Names premodified by noun/pronoun (0/1)

Capability Brown M+

2.1.1.c Last Names premodified by adjective (3/7)

Admirable Crichton M+
 silly Juggins M-
 (gay) Lothario M-
the real McCoy/Mackay M+ [US]
Nosey Parker/nosey parker M-
 Great Scot(t)! Mn [US]
 (regular) Scrooge M-

2.1.2 Last Names with postmodification in NPs (0/1)

Carruthers of the Foreign Office M- [IRE]

2.1.3. Last Names as premodifiers in NPs (7/24)

Belisha beacon Mn
 bowler-hatted bull M-
 Caudle lecture M-
 Garrison finish M+ [US]
 Gibson girl F+ [US]
Lynch law M- [US]
 Mackenzie man Mn [US]
 Pinkerton (man) Mn [US]
Buckley's chance M- [AUS]
Buggins's turn Mn
 Buridan's ass M-

Camacho's wedding M-
 Mother Carey's chicken Fn
 Cecil's fast M-
 Cook's tour M-
 O'Donohue's white horses Mn
 Duggan's dew Mn
 Goodman's croft Mn
Hobson's choice M-
Murphy's law M- [US]
Oakes's oath M- [AUS]
 Occam's razor Mn
Parkinson's law M-
 Pitt's pictures M-

2.2. LAST NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES [0/4]

2.2.0. Last Names without modification in APs (0/2)

bold as Beauchamp M+
 rich as Fugger M+

2.2.1. Last Names with premodification in APs (0/1)

mean as hungry Tyson M- [AUS]

2.2.3. Last Names as premodifiers in APs (0/1)

lazy as Ludlam's dog M-

2.3. LAST NAMES IN ADVERB PHRASES [1/2]

2.3.0. Last Names without modification in AvPs (1/1)

like billy-o(h)/Billyo/Billio M+

2.3.3. Last Names as premodifiers in AvPs (0/1)

like Hunt's dog, he would neither go to church nor stay at home
 M-

2.4. LAST NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES [4/4]

2.4.0. Last Names without modification in PPs (4/4)

according to Cocker M+
according to Gunter M+ [US]
according to Hoyle M+
Al at Lloyd's M+

2.5. LAST NAMES IN VERB PHRASES [7/16]2.5.0. Last Names without modification in VPs (2/6)

to do a Bannister M+
to do/pull a brodie M- [US]
 to take a message to Garcia M+ [US]
to keep up with the Joneses **MF**n(2m) [US]
 to play Pantaloon M-
 to oppose Preston and his mastiffs Mn

2.5.1. Last Names with premodification in VPs (0/2)

to sup with Sir Gresham M-
 to marry mistress Roper Fn

2.5.3. Last Names as premodifiers in VPs (4/7)

to get one's bowler hat Mn
to gerrymander M- [US]
to put on the ritz M+ [US]
to be in Burke M+
to be in Debrett M+
to ride Shank's/Shanks's mare/pony **MF**n(2m)
to go by Walker's bus **MF**n(2m)

2.5.4. Last Names as postmodifiers in VPs (1/1)

to lead a life of Reilly/Riley M+ [US]

2.6. LAST NAMES IN SENTENCES [3/17]2.6.0. Last Names without modification in Sentences (1/10)

Barkis is willing. M+
 Doubting w.Dirleton and resolving those doubts w.Stewart. 2Mn(1m)
 Let her go, Gallagher! Mn
 Let George do it. Mn
 Kiss me, Hardy M+
 Don't hurry, Hopkins. M- [US]
 Horne and Thorne shall make England forlorn. 2**MF**-(2m)
Kilroy was here. Mn [US]
 My name is Short. **MF**-(2m)
 All Stuarts are not sib. **MF**n(2m)

2.6.1. Last Names with premodification in Ss (2/6)2.6.1.a LNs premodified by title in Ss (2/5)

The three best doctors are Dr Diet, Dr Quiet & Dr Merryman. **3MF+**(2m)

Mother Carey is plucking her goose. Fn

You mustn't go there, Mr Ferguson. M-

What will Mrs Grundy say? F-

When Miss/Mr Right comes along **FM+**(2m) [CLAUSE]

2.6.1.c LNs premodified by adjective in Ss (0/1)

Simple/Elementary, my dear Watson. Mn

2.6.2. LNs with postmodification in Ss (0/1)

Do you know Dr Wright of Norwich? **MF-**(2m)

3. IDENTITY NAMES [17/117]

3.1. IDENTITY NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES [16/100]

3.1.0. Identity Names without modification in NPs (12/84)

Aggie Westons/Aggies Fn

Annie Oakley F+ [US]

(All) my eye (& Betty Martin)! F-

Billy Barlow M-

Bob Acres M-

Charlie Moore M+

Charlie Noble Mn

Dick Whittington & his cat M+

Dickey Sam Mn

Dusty Miller **MF**n(2m)

Gordon Bennet Mn [US]

Harriet Lane F-

Hookey Walker! M-

Jack Adams M-

Jack Armstrong M+ [US]

Jack Brag M-

Jack-a-dandy M-

Jack Dusty Mn

Jack Frost Mn

Jack Ketch M-

Jack Pudding M-

Jack-sauce M-

Jack-snip M-

Jack Sprat M-

Jack Straw M-

Jack Tar Mn

Jamie Duff M-

Jane Crow F- [US]

Jane Doe Fn [US]
 Jemmy Jessamy M-
 Jim Crow M- [US]
 Jimmy Higgins M+ [US]
 Jimmy Woodser Mn [AUS]
 Joe Bloggs Mn [US]
Joe Miller M-
 Joe Muggins M-
 Joe Public Mn
 Joe Soap M-
John Bull Mn
 John Chinaman Mn
 John Doakes Mn
John Doe & Richard Roe 2Mn(1m) [US]
John Hancock/Henry Mn [US]
 John Hop/Law M- [US]
 John Q.Public Mn [US]
 John Roberts Mn
 John-a-Nokes & John-a-Stiles 2Mn(1m) [US]
 Johnny/Jean Crapaud **MF**n(2m)
 Johnny Darbies M-
 Johnny Raw M-
 Johnny Reb M- [US]
 the Jolly Roger Mn
 Mae West F+
 Mark Tapley M+
 Mickey Finn M- [US]
 Mickey Mouse M- [US]
 Molly Maguires F- [IRE]
mumbo jumbo M-
Namby Pamby/namby pamby M-
 Nic Frog M-
 Nob Hill M-
Paul Pry M-
 Peter Pan M-
Pooh Bah M-
Rip van Winkle M- [US]
 Robinson Crusoe Mn
 Rosie Lee Fn
 Rube Goldberg M- [US]
 Sally Lunn Fn
 Sam Browne Mn
 Samuel Smiles M- [US]
 Shotten Herring M-
 Simon Legree M- [US]
 Tim Bobbin Mn
 Tom Bowling M+
 Tom Fool M-
 Tom Long M-
 Tom Noddy M-
 Tom Thumb M-

Tom Tiler/Tyler M-
Tommy Atkins Mn
 Tommy Dodd Mn
 Verdant Green M-
Walter Mitty M- [US]

3.1.1. Identity Names with premodification in NPs (2/7)

3.1.1.a INs premodified by title (0/3)

major Jack Downing M+ [US]
 (Sir) John Barleycorn Mn
 (old) Uncle Tom Cobleigh/Cobley & all Mn

3.1.1.c INs premodified by adjective (2/4)

(regular) Becky Sharp F-
 (regular) Dolly Varden F-
 (sweet) Fanny Adams F-
(the real) Simon Pure M+

3.1.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in NPs (2/9)

Jack Cade legislation M-
 Cock Lorell's bote M-
Davy Jones's locker M-
 Fred Karno's army M+
 Harry Tate's navy M+
 Jack/John Drum's entertainment M-
 Joanna Southcott's box F-
 John Tamson's man M-
Tom Tiddler's ground M+

3.2. IDENTITY NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES [0/2]

3.2.0. Identity Names without modification in APs (0/2)

as good as George-a-Green M+
 as game as Ned Kelly M+ [AUS]

3.4. IDENTITY NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES [0/1]

3.4.1. Identity Names with premodification in PPs (0/1)

on one's Jack Jones Mn

3.5. IDENTITY NAMES IN VERB PHRASES [0/12]

3.5.0. Identity Names without modification in VPs (0/8)

to give a Charlie Dunn M- [AUS]
 to do a Charlie Paddock M-
 not to amount to Hannah More F+
 to have a roll Jack Rice couldn't jump over M+ [AUS]
 to John Audley something M-
 to wait for John Long, the carrier M-
 to be kept waiting for Tom Long M-
 to go Tommy Dodd for something Mn

3.5.1. Identity Names with premodification in VPs (0/2)

to sup with Sir Thomas Gresham M-
 to give a person the (old) Harvey Smith M-

3.5.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in VPs (0/2)

to go round Robin Hood's barn Mn
 to sell Robin Hood's pennyworth Mn

3.6. IDENTITY NAMES IN SENTENCES [1/2]3.6.0. Identity Names without modification in Ss (1/1)

Before one/you/I can/could say Jack Robinson Mn [CLAUSE]

3.6.3. Identity Names as premodifiers in Ss (0/1)

Take away this bottle, it has Moll Thompson's mark on it. F-

4. PLACE NAMES [18/93]4.1. PLACE NAMES IN NOUN PHRASES [4/33]4.1.0. Place Names without modification in NPs (0/3)

bristols Nn
 Dragsville N- [US]
 Liberty Hall N+

4.1.1. Place Names with premodification in NPs (0/1)

Downright Dunstable Nn

4.1.3. Place Names as premodifiers in NPs (2/19)

Banbury-man N-
 Banbury tinkers N-

Bow Street runners Nn
Bronx cheer N- [US]
 man on the Clapham omnibus Nn
 Donnybrook (fair) N- [IRE]
 Gotham College N-
 Greenwich barbers Nn
 Gretna Green marriage N-
 Kentucky fire Nn [US]
 Lydford law N-
 Murrumbidgee whaler N- [AUS]
 Paddington Fair N-
Philadelphia lawyer N- [US]
 Scarborough warning N-
 Winchester geese N-
 Yorkshire toast N-
 The Duke of Exeter's daughter N-
 Kentish fire N+

4.1.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in NPs (2/10)

saddler of Bawtry N-
 vicar of Bray N-
the Black Hole of Calcutta N-
 the land of Cockaigne N+
 the white cliffs of Dover N+
the wise men of Gotham N-
 castles in Spain N-
 the three tailors of Tooley Street N-
 Lord of the manor of Tyburn N-
 the gnomes of Zurich N-

4.2. PLACE NAMES IN ADJECTIVE PHRASES [0/2]

4.2.2. Place Names as premodifiers in APs (0/2)

as black as Newgate knocker Nn
 old as Pandon gates/yatts Nn

4.3. PLACE NAMES IN ADVERB PHRASES [2/8]

4.3.0. Place Names without modification in AvPs (1/6)

(born) within the sound of Bow Bells Nn
gone for a burton N-
 gone to Jericho N-
 all Lombard Street to a China orange 2N+
 all holiday at Peckham Nn
 dipped in Shannon N- [IRE]

4.3.3. Place Names as premodifiers in AvPs (1/2)(all) shipshape & Bristol fashion N+

(in) Newgate fashion N-

4.4. PLACE NAMES IN PREPOSITION PHRASES [0/3]4.4.0. Place Names without modification in PPs (0/1)

Birmingham by way of Beachy Head 2N-(1m)

4.4.3. Place Names as premodifiers in PPs (0/1)

at Narrowdale noon N-

4.4.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in PPs (0/1)

in the land of Nod Nn

4.5. PLACE NAMES IN VERB PHRASES [11/33]4.5.0. Place Names without modification in VPs (8/25)

to go Ballarat Nn [AUS]

to go to Bedfordshire Nn

to talk Billingsgate/billingsgate N-

to send a person to Birchin Lane N-

to talk bunkum N- [US]

to be in Carey Street N-

to get a man's head into Chancery N-

to be in Civvy Street Nnto send (a person) to Coventry N-

to meet a person in the Duke's Walk N-

to do a Dunkirk N+

to live on Easy Street N+

to drink at Freeman's Quay N+

to live in Grub Street N-

to ride backwards up Holborn Hill N-

to be on the high road to Needham N-

to carry coals to Newcastle N-

to shoot Niagara N- [US]

to go to Peckham N-

to be in Queer Street N-

to go down the Swanee N- [US]

(not) to set the Thames on fire N-

to take a ride to Tyburn N-

to come home/return by way of Weeping Cross N-

to come Yorkshire over a person N-

4.5.3. Place Names as premodifiers in VPs (3/6)

to (have) kiss(ed) the Blarney stone N+ [IRE]

to go to Blenheim steps N-

to grin like a Cheshire cat N+

to eat Dunmow bacon N+

to fight like Kilkenny cats N+ [IRE]

to ride in the Marrow-bone coach/stage Nn

4.5.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in VPs (0/2)

to (be) summon(ed) before the Mayor of Halgaver N-

to go (in)to the land of Nod Nn

4.6. PLACE NAMES IN SENTENCES [1/14]4.6.0. Place Names without modification in Ss (1/12)

There, go to Bath with you! N-

When Dudman and Ramhead meet. 2N- (1m) [CLAUSE]

It all goes down to Gutter Lane. N-

Go to Halifax! N-

I think you were born at Hogs-Norton. N-

From Hull, Hell & Halifax, good Lord, deliver us. 3N-(1m)

Go to Jericho! N-

I wish you were at Jericho! N-

I'm from Missouri (,you have got to show me)! N- [US]

He may remove Mortstone. N-

He has had a treat in Stafford Court. N-

I's Yorkshire, too. N-

4.6.3. Place Names as premodifiers in Ss (0/1)

You are no better than a Billingsgate fish-fag. N-

4.6.4. Place Names as postmodifiers in Ss (0/1)

God bless the Duke of Argyle! N+

Tiedostonimi: ISO G 01122005
Hakemisto: D:\AMK
Malli: C:\Documents and Settings\mexi.HOME-
FVCM1WPBZM\Application Data\Microsoft\Mallit\Normal.dot
Otsikko: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ORIGINS OF ENGLISH
IDIOMS
Aihe:
Tekijä: SAVONIA AMK
Avainsanat:
Kommentit:
Luontipäivä: 2.12.2005 22:14:00
Version numero: 2
Viimeksi tallennettu: 2.12.2005 22:14:00
Viimeksi tallentanut: mexi
Kokonaismuokkusaika: 1 Minuutti
Viimeksi tulostettu: 2.12.2005 22:15:00
Viimeisestä täydestä tulostuksesta
Sivuja: 254
Sanoja: 37 480 (noin)
Merkkejä: 303 588 (noin)