
Reviewed by JULIE COLEMAN

1 Introduction

The *Historical thesaurus of the* Oxford English Dictionary represents a re-arrangement of the contents of the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED2*) by meaning. Three different versions of this re-classification are available: the published book (*HTOED*), a version adapted for use in conjunction with the *OED Online* (*HTOED3*) and sampled sections pre-published on the University of Glasgow website. This review will focus on the hard-copy publication, but will also discuss the incorporation of *HTOED3* into the *OED Online* and compare these two classifications with the earlier classifications of vocabulary found in John Wilkins’ *Essay towards a real character and a philosophical language* (1668) and in Peter Mark Roget’s *Thesaurus of English words and phrases* (Roget 1852; Roget & Lloyd 1984).

To facilitate evaluation of the contents of these reference works, it was necessary to select a field of meaning for analysis. As we shall see, the organization of terms for parts of the body reveals some interesting features of Roget’s classification. However, many parts of the body are lexically uninteresting, in that a term from Old English (OE), such as *hand* or *foot*, has always been central to the field. This analysis therefore concentrates on terms for the buttocks: a much more interesting semantic field from a linguistic perspective, in that even the selection of a prototype proved to be problematic because of changing historical sensibilities and national differences in usage.

2 Background
2.1 John Wilkins

There have been many attempts to classify words according to their meaning. Indeed, partial onomasiological classifications preceded alphabetical listings of English words by several centuries (Sauer 2009: 36-8), but there is no evidence that anyone attempted the mammoth task of producing a complete classification of English vocabulary until John Wilkins, Dean of Ripon and Secretary of the Royal Society, was commissioned to do so by the Society he had co-founded. His intention was to produce ‘[...] a philosophical [i.e. scientific] language, which would be universally intelligible and capable of allowing more precise communication’ (Leonardi 2004: 39), and he was influenced in this by the intellectual traditions of universal language, logical and ontological classification, encyclopaedias of natural history and topical word lists (Hüllen 1999: 299). Although Wilkins did not believe, like some of his contemporaries, that the Adamic language could be recovered, his remit was ‘[...] to develop an artificial equivalent based upon a classification of knowledge’ (Henry 2004). Unfortunately, all but two partial copies of the first edition perished in the Great Fire of London, along with Wilkins’ manuscript, and it took two further years to reconstruct the text and tables (Wilkins 1668: Epistle) in collaboration with contributors including John Ray and Samuel Pepys (Henry 2004). Wilkins’ work was well received by the Royal Society at first, but ‘[...] the committee established to improve on the Essay never reported’ (Henry 2004) and there were no further editions.

2.2 Peter Mark Roget

Peter Mark Roget was also, for a time, the Secretary of the Royal Society, though it is telling that he constructed his own classification from scratch rather than modelling it upon Wilkins’ earlier work. Roget had trained as a doctor and become prominent in the areas of public health and physiology. He ‘[...] subscribed to the conviction that the classification of animals and plants mirrored the order of the universe as designed by God’ (Hüllen 2004: 15-16), and
this conviction is reflected in the structure of a classification that he compiled, at first, purely for his own benefit. Roget’s classification, like Wilkins’, was designed to reveal the divine order inherent in the world and to create greater order in the language used to describe it. Later expansions of his work, influenced by its use in literary composition and in setting and solving crosswords, have sometimes served to obscure these original aims.

2.3 HTOED

In 1965, following discussions with his department at the University of Glasgow, Professor Michael Samuels announced that he and his colleagues were to produce a historical thesaurus of the English language (pp. xiv-xv). This heroic undertaking involved copying individual definitions from the OED on to small slips of paper which were then re-sorted, initially at least, according to Roget’s classificatory numbers. These slips formed the basis of a re-classification of the contents of the OED by meaning. Information was added to it about OE words that did not survive the Norman Conquest, which were culled from the best OE dictionaries then available (see Roberts, Kay & Grundy 1995: xvi-xvii). Much of this information is not provided by the OED, which lists only those OE words that continued into the Middle English (ME) period. The Thesaurus of Old English maintains a separate existence in two paper editions as well as online (Roberts, Kay & Grundy 1995, 2000).

2.4 HTOED and HTOED3

The forty-four years of the HTOED project saw the publication of Burchfield’s Supplement to the OED, its incorporation into OED2 and the beginning of work towards OED3 (Brewer 2007). Terms first listed by Burchfield, in OED2, and in the OED Additions series are incorporated into HTOED; they are joined in HTOED3 by terms added in OED3. The period spanned by work on HTOED also saw the adoption and abandonment of computer-related solutions to the tasks involved as technology developed. A fire and uncertainties of funding provided additional headaches for those working on the project, but notwithstanding the
practical considerations involved in the production of so large and complex a research tool, the project team and others associated with it have already generated over a hundred publications using HTOED data, including my own PhD. A list of publications is available on the University of Glasgow website, but it will probably never be comprehensive again. Now that HTOED and HTOED3 are widely available, it is hard to see why any serious diachronic study of the lexis of English would fail to employ one or other of these invaluable reference tools.

3 The structure of the classifications

A poster provided with the HTOED explains the structure of its classification. Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the first two levels of that explanation.

Unlike Roget’s classification, which is linear, the numbering system of HTOED emphasizes its taxonomic structure. An examination of that structure emphasizes that HTOED is based in what is physical and observable. This is also in contrast with Roget’s classification. For example, Roget (1853) places rump in subsection 235 Rear, which is part of the section Dimensions, under the class Space. The nouns in this section read:

(235) REAR, back, posteriority, the rear rank, rear-guard, the background, heels, tail, rump, croup, breech, dorsum, dorsal region, stern, poop, after-part, heelpiece. (In a medal), the reverse.

Later editions of Roget’s Thesaurus expanded his classification and supplemented the vocabulary included within it. Roget & Lloyd (1984), for example, list a range of synonyms and terms related to rump in their re-numbered subsection 238 Rear:

buttocks, backside, behind, derrière, posterior; bottom, seat, sit-me-down; bum, arse; rear, stern, tail; hindquarters, croup, crupper; hips, haunches, hams, hunkers; rump, loin; dorsal region, lumbar r., small of the back, lower back, coccyx; fundament, anus.
In order to understand why Roget classified *rump* where he did, it is necessary to look at the subsections surrounding it: Front, Rear; Laterality, Anteposition; Dextrality, Sinistrality (from Roget 1853). For Roget, *rump* is a concrete example of the abstract notion of Posteriority: it is an example of something that is positioned at the back and is therefore situated close to sections describing a varied range of other things found in other positions. The following examples from Roget & Lloyd (1984) represent an accretion of later editors’ attempts to work within Roget’s structure: *penis / clitoris / vagina* (167 Propagation), *stomach / bladder* (194 Receptacle), *head* (213 Summit), *foot* (214 Base), *intestines* (224 Interiority), *navel, pupil* (225 Centrality), *face* (237 Front), *breast* (253 Convexity), *nose* (254 Prominence), *armpit* (255 Concavity), *hand* (378 Touch), and *tongue* (386 Taste).

Although Roget’s classification is essentially linear, he did place antonymous sections together in parallel columns in early editions. Roget’s pairing of antonymous categories is reminiscent of Wilkins’, in which branching paired subsections are defined in opposition to one another, as shown in Figure 2. In Wilkins’ classification, *buttock* is in opposition to *anus*; but as hinder-parts, *buttock* and *anus* are together in opposition to lower fore-parts, like *groin*. These lower parts are in turn placed in a tripartite opposition to the middle and upper parts of the trunk.

**FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE**

Wilkins’ is a classification of things and of parts of things; Roget’s is a classification based upon ideas or abstract notions. *HTOED* is different again, in that it is a classification whose starting point was the words themselves and the semantic relationships between them. In *HTOED*, hyponymous fields branch off from their hypernyms; meronyms branch off from their holonyms. For example, *buttock* (01.02.05.08.03.01.02) is categorized as part of the back (01.02.05.08.03.01), which is part of the trunk (01.02.05.08.03), which is one of the external parts (01.02.05.08) of the body (01.02.05). The body is a main sub-section in *Life*
On the other hand, *anus* (01.02.05.18.01.05/04.03.01) is part of the rectum (01.02.05.18.01.05/04.03), which is part of the large intestine (01.02.05.18.01.05/04), itself part of the intestines (01.02.05.18.01.05), which are digestive organs (01.02.05.18.01) forming part of the digestive system (01.02.05.18) of the body (01.02.05). This branching taxonomy is best represented in a diagram, as in Figure 3, in which shared elements of the reference numbers are not repeated at lower levels. A selection of other headings provides a broader context.

**FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE**

An advantage of Wilkins’ and the *HTOED* structure is that we can make reasonable predictions about where other body parts will be placed in these classifications; in Roget’s classification, we have to guess which abstract quality of a body part will have determined its position. However, since most users of Roget or *HTOED* will access their contents via the index rather than by negotiating the structure of the classification, the occasional oddnesses of Roget’s structure may be of little practical importance. A disadvantage of the greater complexity of the structure of *HTOED* is the unavoidable length of the reference numbers, which are undeniably off-putting and unwieldy. Having found the appropriate reference in the index, section 238 Rear is considerably easier to locate than 01.02.05.08.03.01.02 Buttock(s).

**4 The contents of *HTOED***

However, a closer look at the contents of the *HTOED* classification will demonstrate why inexperienced users would be well advised to persevere with the referencing system. 01.02.05.08.03.01.02 Buttock(s) reads:

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bæce OE · gebæcu OE · broc OE · earsendu OE · earslyra OE · ende OE · gupan OE ·
setl OE · brec<breech OE-1821 · cule c1220-1543; 1825 (Dict.) · fundament 1297- ·
buttock(s) a1300- · tail 1303- (US dial. & colloq.) · toute c1305-c1460 · nage c1320 ·
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tail-end 1377-1401 · arse 1377-1864 · bum 1387- (vulgar) · bewschers a1400 · tut a1400 · croupon c1400 (humorous) · luddock c1420-c1490 · lend c1440; 1508-a1550 (Scots) · butt c1450- (chiefly dial. & US) · croup(e) c1475-1678 (humorous) · rearward a1500-1855 · rumple a1500- · backside c1500- · dock 1508; 1684 · rump 1530- · hurdies 1535- (Scots) · bun c1538- (Scots & northern English) · sitting-place 1545-1704 · prat(s) 1567- (slang, orig. cant) · back-parts 1581; 1650 · crupper 1594-1842 (chiefly humorous) · catastrophe 1597 (humorous) · podex 1598-1822/34 · cheeks a1600 (slang); 1922- (slang) · posteriorums 1607-1653 (humorous) · seat 1607- · stern 1614- (chiefly humorous & vulgar) · posteriors 1619- · breek 1641 · poop c1645-1706 (colloq.) · flitch 1648 · bumfiddle 1675-1825 (vulgar) · quarter(s) 1679-1853 · foundation 1681 · toby 1681-1842 · nates 1706- · some-place 1725 · moon 1756 (slang); 1922-1938 (slang) · derrière 1774- (colloq.) · fud 1785-1804 (Scots & northern English) · rass 1790- (slang) · seat of honour 1792- · bottom 1794/6- (colloq.) · rear 1796- (colloq.) · stern-post 1810 (joc.) · hinderlands 1818-1891 (Scots) · hinderlings 1818- (Scots) · ultimatum 1823-1825 (slang) · behind a1830- (colloq. & vulgar) · latter end 1852 · hinders 1857- · ass 1860- (now chiefly US) · botty 1874- (slang) · stern-works 1879 (joc.) · jacksy 1896- (slang) · sit 1903 · trunk-end 1913 (slang) · tochus 1914- (slang, chiefly Jewish & N. Amer.) · b.t.m. 1919-1934 (colloq.) · sit-upon 1920- · bot(t) 1922- (colloq.) · sit-me-down(-upon) 1926- (colloq.) · fanny 1928- (slang, chiefly US) · beam 1929- · can 1930- (slang, orig. US) · keister 1931- (US slang) · bim 1935-1948 (slang) · posterior 1936- (colloq.) · rear end 1937- (slang) · quoit 1941 (Austral. slang) · zatch 1950 (vulgar) · twat 1950- (US dial.) · rusty-dusty 1953-1970 (dial.) · tush(ie/y) 1962- (slang, chiefly N. Amer.) · buns 1968- (N. Amer. slang)
This is clearly a richer source of information than either Wilkins (four synonyms) or Roget (twenty-nine synonyms). There is no question that *HTOED*’s ninety-one synonyms place these other reference works entirely in the shade.

However, *HTOED*’s pre-eminence is not just a matter of superior numbers. It also provides us with information about distribution both in terms of geography (for example, *Scots, Northern English, US, Austral, N. Amer. *and the less specific *dial.*) and sociology (for example, *Jewish, cant* and the less specific *slang*), as well as about register and tone (for example, *colloq., vulgar, joc.* and *humorous*). The faith we can place in these labels depends on the consistency with which the *OED* distinguishes between jocular and humorous terms or between US and North American terms, and it is unlikely that a work written by so many editors over such a long period is any more consistent in labelling than it is in bibliographic notation or defining style (see Brewer 2005). However, the sheer number of terms labelled as humorous, jocular, slang or vulgar in itself tells us that speakers of English have felt embarrassed or uncomfortable talking and writing about this part of the body. For comparison, only seven synonymous nouns are listed under 01.02.05.08.04.02.03 Knee.

**4.1 Using HTOED in literary research**

Labelling is not what makes *HTOED* unique, however. What is truly innovative is that it is a historical thesaurus: using information provided in the *OED*, it provides dates of usage for each term and orders synonyms chronologically. *HTOED* is clearly an invaluable tool for diachronic linguistics in this respect, but it also offers much to scholars of literature. For example, in Bennett’s edition of the B text of Piers Plowman a monk describes the penalty for lying:

[I] amchalanged in þe chapitelhous as I a childe were,

And baleised on þe bare ers, and no breche bitwene. (V: 172-5)
Tiller (1981:57) represents Langland’s *ers* with *arse*, Schmidt (2009: 48) translates it as *bum*, and Economou (1996: 174) as *ass*. The three terms clearly share the same referent, but it is unclear which of these alternatives is truest to the connotations of the original. The *OED* dates this citation to 1377, at which time, according to *HTOED*, Langland had nine synonyms to choose from: *breech, cule, fundament, buttock(s), tail, toute, nage, tail-end* and *arse*. The *OED* suggests that *breech* probably referred to the clothing covering this part of the body in early examples, with clear references to the body part dating only from the sixteenth century. We can also discount *nage* as a likely choice for Langland, because it is only cited once. This leaves seven terms that Langland might have used in this context, and *OED* etymologies and citations suggest the following positions on a scale of vulgarity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulgar/Impolite</th>
<th>↔</th>
<th>Euphemistic/Polite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>toute</td>
<td>arse, buttock(s), cule</td>
<td>fundament, tail, tail-end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the pre-sixteenth-century citations for *tail* pair it with *top* in idiomatic phrases such as *top and tail* and *top over tail*, which suggests that *tail* would also not have worked for Langland in this context. Assuming that all the other terms were used in Langland’s dialect, if he had wanted to select a vulgar term, equivalent to Modern English *arse*, he could have used *toute*. If he had wanted to spare his readers’ feelings, he could have selected *fundament* (or, more convincingly, excluded the description altogether). Of the three apparently unmarked terms, the French loan *cule* may have sounded more elevated than either *arse* or *buttocks*, but all three terms were widely used in a variety of contexts at this time, suggesting that even *bum* and *ass* may be a little too informal as present-day English alternatives. An unmarked modern term is hard to find in such an emotionally-fraught semantic field, but *bottom* or *buttocks* might be truer present-day English representations of the connotations of the original
in contemporary British English: one is informal, the other more explicit, but both are more likely to amuse than offend.

The connotations of *arse* had clearly changed by the time Wilkins published his *Tables*. Vulgar individuals looking for *arse* in Wilkins’ index would have been directed to the section shown in Figure 2 even though the term itself is not included there. The index is not a complete listing of the vocabulary of English: in general it merely lists the terms included in the tables, so its inclusion of *arse* is noteworthy. Clearly Wilkins knew the word and he would not have felt the need to index it if it were not frequently used by his contemporaries, but he apparently chose not to offer it up to readers who had not specifically sought it out.

5 Classifying Meaning

When he expanded and re-issued his father’s *Thesaurus* in 1879, John Lewis Roget discussed at some length the problem that:

> [m]any words, originally employed to express simple conceptions, are found to be capable, with perhaps a very slight modification of meaning, of being applied in many varied associations. (Roget 1879: vii-viii)

Boundaries between meanings are not impermeable or permanent. Although the compilers of a historical dictionary will tend to discard ambiguous citations if clearer examples are available, it is undeniable that grey areas exist where it is unclear whether sense 1c or 1d is intended. The purpose of historical lexicography is to impose an appearance of order and clarity upon this multiplicity of shifting meanings that shade into one another. For words used with high frequency, more specific meanings may be accorded their own definitions; for less frequently used words, an ‘also specifically...’ or ‘usually...’ sub-definition will be inserted.

For the compiler of a thesaurus, the choice is more stark: either a word is listed in the section appropriate to its more specific meaning, or that usage is not recorded at all. Roget’s son went some way towards dealing with this problem by expanding the use of cross-
references between sections, and the abstract structure sometimes means that duplication is not necessary. For instance, *cheeks* can refer to either upper or lower fleshy parts of the body, but both would belong under Laterality in Roget’s classification. Similarly, euphemistic terms for the bottom do not need to be duplicated, including *foundation, cushion, fitch* and *brawn*: in theory any terms with these meanings (*upholstery, shanks, flank*, and so on), could be similarly employed. However, Roget’s structure also means that it can be difficult to determine when euphemistic usages are being implied. For example, in the section from Roget quoted above, a semi-colon between *loin* and *dorsal region* suggests a shift in meaning: that perhaps the terms from *dorsal region* to *coccyx* were listed as straightforward references to other parts of the body situated at the rear rather than as euphemistic terms for the buttocks. A further semi-colon pairs *fundament* and *anus* as more specific terms, but it is only possible to speculate about the nature of other groups in this section:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buttocks, backside, behind, derrière, posterior</td>
<td>unmarked?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bottom, seat, sit-me-down</td>
<td>euphemistic? Used to children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bum, arse</td>
<td>vulgar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rear, stern, tail</td>
<td>more general?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hindquarters, croup, crupper</td>
<td>chiefly animals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hips, haunches, hams, hunkers</td>
<td>encompassing adjacent body parts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rump, loin</td>
<td>also cuts of meat?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilkins’ desire for precision over-rode the ambiguities of word meaning: where a word is placed in his classification is as likely to have been influenced by where it was needed as by its actual usage. For example, Figure 2 shows that *nape* and *dulap* (for *dewlap*) are listed alongside *neck*, and *scapulary* alongside *shoulder*. Although *scapulary* was a synonym for *shoulder* at this time, albeit a rare one, *nape* and *dewlap* are not synonyms: *nape* refers to the back of the neck and *dewlap* to loose skin hanging from the throat of an animal or human.
The only reason *dewlap* and *nape* are not presented in opposition to one another, is that no equivalent level of antonymy was possible under *shoulder*. Similarly, Figure 2 also shows that although Wilkins presents the opposition in upper fore-parts as being between *breast* (‘more general’) and *dug* (‘more specially the glandulous part designed for milk in females’), his placement implies that only females have nipples. The appearance of *breast* at the end of the *dug* list, apparently in opposition with itself, could be seen as an acknowledgement that, in reality, words were not used as precisely as Wilkins might have liked.

5.1 Classifying meaning in *HTOED* and *HTOED3*

What will not be appreciated by most users of *HTOED3* are the differences between the printed and online versions of the classification. OE terms that did not survive the Conquest are not included in the *OED* and thus these are not presented in *HTOED3*. This might lead unwary users to the conclusion that Anglo-Saxons had but one name for their *breech*, although the *HTOED* listing indicates that this was far from the case. There is, however, a more significant disparity. Compilers of *HTOED* were content to duplicate entries where *OED* definitions conflated meanings represented in more than one place in the classification.

Words like *arse*, *breech*, *croup(e)*, *rump*, and so on, used with reference to human and animal body parts, are thus listed twice: both in 01.02.05.08.03.01.02 Buttock(s) and in 01.02.06.12.02.03/01 Rump and Tail. However, the structure of *HTOED3* provides a single thesaurus link from each dictionary definition wherever possible, so conflated meanings should ideally be represented in only one place in the thesaurus. For example, *ass* is to be found in Buttock(s), but *arse* is listed only under Rump, presumably because its definition, ‘[t]he fundament, buttocks, posteriors, or rump of an animal’, was read as referring only to animals. Conversely, *croup(e)* is listed in both of these sections because separately numbered definitions explain its use with reference to humans and animals. The one-link rule is not rigidly observed, however. From *croupon*, *podex*, *poop* and *stern*, whose definitions make
their use with reference to humans and animals both explicit and equal, links are provided to both thesaurus sections, one after another. On the other hand, although the definition for *rumple* reads ‘A tail, a rump’, and although it appears to be used chiefly with reference to animals, *rumple* is listed under Buttock(s) as well as Rump.

The taxonomy of *HTOED3*, which is only one click away, indicates nominal subsections for ‘state of having no [buttocks]’, ‘types of [buttocks]’ (with a subsection for ‘person having [a particular type of buttocks]’), ‘cleft in [buttocks]’, as well as for related adjectives and adverbs. Terms for contiguous body parts are easily located by negotiating this classification, so their absence from this section is not problematic. It takes little reflection for a user of present-day English to notice that *arse* is missing from this section, and a word search and a click will reveal its position elsewhere. Similar misplacement of obsolete and less familiar terms will prove more challenging for users of *HTOED3* however, some of whom will undoubtedly employ these lists entirely uncritically rather than treating them as a starting point for further exploration.

6 Coverage

In all, the thesauruses discussed here list a total of 109 terms which appear to have been used with reference to the human bottom or parts closely associated with it. Cross-reference between them reveals that Wilkins lists twenty-two of these terms in total, many elsewhere in the *Tables* as specific terms for the hind-parts of animals or other things. Roget & Lloyd list thirty-three of these terms in places where they could be understood with this meaning: largely in Rear, but also in Laterality and Support. Obsolete and slang terms are among those most likely to be omitted from Roget’s classification.

Of the 109 synonyms presented across these classifications, *HTOED* omits only additions made in *OED3* (*batty, booty*) and transparent phrases and compounds not separately listed in the *OED* (*dorsal region, lumbar region, hindquarters, lower back*). Many terms
found in this section in Roget’s classification are placed in other sections in *HTOED*, including *anus* (Anus), *small of the back* (Back), *ham* (Back of thigh / Back of knee), *hunkers* (Crouching / Squatting), *coccyx* (Pelvis), and *huck, scia, sciatic, huckle, haunch(es), loin and hips* (Side).

*HTOED3* omits the eight OE terms that are not recorded in the ME period as well as the transparent phrases and compounds omitted in *HTOED*, but also omits one euphemistic use found in this section of the *HTOED* classification (*some-place*, which is listed under *some pron.*, *adj.*, *adv.*, and *n.*):

1725 A. Ramsay *Gentle Shepherd* v. iii, She’s baith a slee and a revengfu’ bitch, And that my some-place [ posteriors] finds.

Similarly, *HTOED3* does not include *back-parts* though the *HTOED* dates are based on *OED* data, apparently from *back- comb. form* 1b (a) “Lying at the back, in the rear, or behind; hinder; = back adj. 1”, in which citations for *back-view, back-observation, and back-wall* join the following examples of *back-part(s)*:

1581 J. Marbeck *Bk. Notes & Common Places* 86 Thou shalt see my Backe-partes, but my face shal not be seene.

a1680 T. Goodwin *Wks.* (1704) V. iv. 8 The Back-parts of God, which we call his Attributes.


Only the first two citations are represented in this section of *HTOED*, but both are problematic. Both appear to refer to a passage in Exodus 33:23, which is itself cited under 1a for *back adj*. The broader context (from the King James Version) does not support a specific interpretation with reference to the divine buttocks:
And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen. (Exodus 33:22-3).

Many modern translations (for example, *Holy Bible, new international version* 2011 [1973]) use *back* where the King James has *back parts*. The *New living translation* (2007 [1996]) has ‘I will remove my hand and let you see me from behind’. This general sense ‘the parts at the back’ is the same as in the third *OED* citation for *back-part* and did not need to be separated from it in *HTOED*.

The final *HTOED3* omission in this section is *ham*. Although *ham* is included in *HTOED3* with sense 1a (‘That part of the leg at the back of the knee; the hollow or bend of the knee’), sense 1b (‘By extension: The back of the thigh; the thigh and buttock collectively. Usually in pl.’) does not appear in *HTOED3*. No thesaurus link is provided from this definition, presumably because there is not a position in the *HTOED3* structure that corresponds precisely to this extended meaning.

7 Conclusions

To paraphrase Joseph Addison (1711), scholars of the history of English can count themselves peculiarly blessed, not only in having the world’s finest historical dictionary at their disposal, but also the world’s first historical thesaurus. If speed and ease of reference is the priority, *HTOED3* is invaluable and it will continue to develop as the *OED3* revision programme progresses. However, *HTOED* offers broader historical coverage and is more comprehensive. *HTOED3* more often follows the contours of the *OED* without critical analysis; *HTOED* deconstructs *OED* definitions that combine several uses, but in doing so occasionally moves too far from the *OED*’s evidence base.

References


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*Author’s address: (Julie Coleman)*

*School of English*

*University of Leicester*
University Road

Leicester, LE1 7RH

UK

E-mail: jmcl21@leicester.ac.uk
Figure 1. The structure of HTOED
IV. By TRUNK is meant the middle part of the Body, considered directly from Head and Limbs. The Parts of the Trunk are distinguishable by their various Positions, being either

Upper 1. towards the top of the Trunk.

(a) Determined to the Fore part, but common to both: (b) the Crest of the Head: or the upper Convexity of Brain and Back.

SNEK. Neck. Bulp.

2. SHOULDER, Scapular.

Other to the Fore part: (a) more general: or more specifically the glandulous part shagged for milk in females.

3. BOEAST. Pollexal, Rilson.

2. DOUG. Odder, Testi, Nipple, Pop. Brain.

(b) Hind part: more general: or more specifically the Bones of it.

4. SNACK.

3. TERTIARA, Spndyl. Jinal, Cline.

Middle.

Rudder 1. the direct Muscles: or transverse Bones.

5. STOIN. Cline.

4. RIB.

Sul 2. more general: or more specifically the lower part of it.

5. SODI. Lateral, collateral.

5. FLANK. Rond.

Fore part: more general: or more specifically the concave middle part of it.

6. SHELLE. Panchor, Pannal, Peritoneum.

6. SNAVEL. Embiolal.

Lower.

Fore part: the concave part between the belly and thighs: or seat of the Privy parts between the thighs.

5. SGOIN.

2. SHARE. Tuff.

Hinder part: more general: or specifically the cavity.

6. SUTTOCK. Brech, Haunch, Ham.

6. FUNDAMENT. Deck.

Figure 2. Wilkins (1668) Chapter VII, section IV
Figure 3. 01.02 Life in HTOED