Proverbs in Medieval English Drama

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One of the major problems accompanying a study of proverbs is the fact that the term 'proverb' has not had a specific usage. The term is frequently confused or loosely associated with maxim, adage, or epigram, and often covers idiomatic phrases and similes.

The definition of The Oxford English Dictionary is more inclusive than any other dictionaries of proverbs. It defines a proverb as "a short pithy saying in common recognized use," and lumps together examples of all sorts of expressions. According to G. L. Apperson, the first editor of English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases: A Historical Dictionary (London, 1929), a proverb is a crystalized summary of popular wisdom or fancy. M. P. Tilley follows Apperson and has included proverbs, proverbial phrases and proverbial similes without discerning them in his A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Ann Arbor, 1950), on the basis that he cannot find any agreement on what constitutes a proverb.

"It might be better, indeed, to attempt no exact definition of proverbs but to rely rather on the common and received understanding of what is likely to be found in a book called a Dictionary of Proverbs or the like. As an old hand at collecting, quoting, paraphrasing, and attempting definitions of proverbs, I am inclined to feel that there is little gain in going over the old ground once more, especially since no simple definition, or even series of simple definitions is likely to fit everything found in a comprehensive collection." (p. xi)

He further says, "We could indeed do worse than accept this definition to a point by agreeing that proverbs are ordered combination of words, or whatever origin or age, which survived for a time because of brevity and cleverness," and has collected in his Dictionary not only true proverbs but all sorts of figurative expressions which resemble the simile, the metaphor, and the hyperbole.

Thus, in many cases, collectors of proverbs are not or could not be interested in discriminating between proverbs and other sayings. Accordingly, their dictionaries are very comprehensive. Proverbs, proverbial facts, sentences, maxims, observations of generations, warnings, admonitions, guides to conduct or accumulated wise sayings are all recorded.

Since all the proverb collectors, without exception, have not set up any clear definition of proverbs, it would be wise to rely on their understanding and acceptance and to accept what they have included in their collections.

However, through my investigation of proverbs in medieval English dramas, I have found a very clear, specific tendency which is seen throughout the so called the English Cycle Plays. From the four great Cycles, namely, the Chester, the York, the Towneley and the Ludus Coventriae, and the true Coventry Plays, we could collect a great deal of popular proverbs used in the periods when these plays were written and
performed. The dramatic characters who use these popular proverbs are, except for a few examples, always described as in a fallen state. Some of them are evil, some of them are foolish, though not evil. They also tend extensively to use idiomatic phrases. On the other hand, similes are used by both good, virtuous characters and bad characters.

For the present discussion, the Collections of proverbs, similes and idiomatic expressions from the *Towneley Cycle* and the *York Cycle*, which are particularly noted for their extensive use of proverbs, are presented at the end of the paper. The expressions from the *Towneley Cycle* are in Collection I and those from the *York Cycle* are in Collection II. The numbers of the expressions from these two Cycles are separately shown in Table I and Table II, together with the numbers of proverbs quoted by Whiting in his *Dictionary*. To simplify the discussion, I shall concentrate on the sayings, particularly on proverbs and similes from the *Towneley Cycle*.

The phrases and expressions are divided into three different categories. The proverbs and proverbial expressions are in one category. The similes and the idiomatic phrases are shown separately. They are marked with special signs, # and *. In the proverbs and proverbial expressions, some idiomatic expressions or oaths are included. “Go to the devil of hell” (D10), which is quoted as a proverb by Whiting, is an idiomatic swearing in our sense. Whereas, such sayings as “Amend while you can” (A1) may be called sententious with a Biblical origin. Proverbs are usually figurative in concealing a hidden meaning, but this saying is direct in expression and unenigmatic in meaning. In some cases it is not always easy to differentiate between the proverbial and idiomatic phrases. The task of discriminating between these two expressions is rather difficult. We really do not know whether the contemporary people were bothered with the differences or the discrimination. Here we must be rather liberal in
our interpretation of these expressions. Indeed, a lot of mere idiomatic phrases are recorded by Whiting and Tilley, and in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*. Therefore, when I say proverbs, I mean true proverbs, proverbial phrases, and other expressions which seem to be idiomatic, but are not so distinctive as a truly idiomatic phrase.

Whiting has collected roughly 146 proverbs, proverbial phrases and similes from the *Towneley Cycle*. Out of 146, 45 can surely be classified as similies. The rest could be either proverbs or proverbial or idiomatic phrases and oaths. As I have shown on Table I & II, I have collected 224 proverbs, in 155 items, and 63 similies in 46 items, 92 important idiomatic phrases, almost twice as many as Whiting has offered. The reason why Whiting has missed so many proverbs will give us an important clue how we should constitute our idea about proverbs in medieval dramas, as I shall discuss later.

As we see from Collection I & II, most of the proverbs and the proverbial expressions from the *Towneley and York Cycles* are concerned with popular wisdom and counsels which are expessed through homely and popular figures and in language similarly homely and popular. There are some expressions Latinate or Biblical in diction such as “To grieve may not amend” (G6), “Mourning may not amend” (M8), “Sorrow helps not” (S14a). They might be classified as sententious sayings. Such sayings as “Not to set a bean” (B2), “Not to set a fart” (F3), “Not to set a fly wing” (F9), “Not to set at a pin” (P6), “Not worth a groat” (G7), “Not worth a leek” (L5), “Not worth a needle” (N2a), sound to be idiomatic oaths expressed in homely, popular terms. While, “Nothing impossible for God’s will” (N6), “God turn all to good” (T13) might be rather called maxims. The meanings of these expressions are abstract and their counsels are obvious.

The most familiar proverbs in the Towneley Cycle are those having
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visual denotation created out of the everyday lives of the ordinary people such as “It is a good jest to drink of a gourd” (B10), “To hop like cocks in a croft” (C5), “One is horned like a cow” (C10), “To have a crow to pull” (C12), “To drink as we brew” (D36), “It is to far to tell an egg to go” (E4), “To go with a riven hood” (H3), “To go with a broken shoes and torn hoses” (H6), “Mutton is a good meat for glutton” (M10), “To teach one a new play of Yule” (P8), “The pot goes so long to the water” (P11), “To have more tow on one’s rock” (R4), “To claw one’s toes” (T7) and so on.

The more familiar proverbs of this type are pithy sayings expressed in easily remembered forms involving some contrast with cause and effect such as “First creep then walk” (C11), “Fair and soft men go far” (F2), “Worse people worse laws” (L2), “Good mending short ending” (M4), “After play comes sorrows” (P7), “Sorrow at the parting if laughter at meeting” (S14b), “Ill spun weft comes out evil” (W5).

The dramatic characters who put these popular proverbs and proverbial expressions in their mouths are, Cain, Jack Garcio (Cain’s servant), Noah, Noah’s Wife, Pharaoh, Mak (Sheep stealer), Mak’s Wife, the Shepherds, Garcio (the servant of the Shepherds), Joseph (the husband of Mary), Herod the Great, Herod’s Nuncius, Herod’s Soldiers, High Priests Annas and Caiphas, Pilate, Pilate’s Consultus, the Soldiers who torture and crucify Jesus, Froward (the servant of the Soldiers), Tutiuillus the Vice, Thomas, Paul, Peter and Lazarus.

Except in the case of Lazarus, who is portrayed as the prefigure of Christ, and warns the audience by saying, “Amend while you can,” no one is described as perfect or as free from sin. They are all in a fallen state. The three Shepherds in the Adoration have the blessing to be the first to meet the Child Jesus. But before meeting the Child Jesus, they are uncouth herdsmen, without any reason, sense, or good judgment. As for Noah’s
Wife, although not wicked, she is a paradigm of shrew. She refuses to obey her husband and puts the whole family in disorder. Noah is an honest man. He finds favour before God and is chosen for the New World. But even he is far from perfection. He is lacking in the authority as the head of his family and cannot control his wife.

Some characters in the Passion sequences, commit formidable sins. Judas betrays his Lord and sells the Lord to the Jews. Peter, another disciple of Jesus, denies his Lord three times when the Lord was arrested. Thomas does not believe the resurrection of the Lord until he is encouraged to put his finger into the wounds fresh with blood. These disciples not only are unfaithful but breach the goodness of faith. The soldiers who torture and crucify Jesus are not aware of what they are doing, but rather enjoy the task as if they were engaged in a play.

Joseph, the husband of Mary, is described as a “just man” in Matthew (1:19). However, the Joseph in the Towneley Cycle as well as in the other Cycles, is nothing but a silly old fool. He is dubious of Mary’s chastity when she conceives, and abuses her for it. He is greatly troubled about her and decides to leave her.

Now let us examine the characters who use similes in the Towneley Cycle. As the sentences marked by the special sign * (asterisk) indicate, similes are used by both the good people and the bad people to enliven their speeches. For instance, “As clear as crystal” (C15) is used by both Mary and Joseph. Popular similes on steel, “As hard as any steel” (S20), “As stable as any steel” (S20a), “As true as any steel” (S20b) are used by Thomas, Angel, Deus, Mak the Thief, the First Shepherd. Other popular similes concerning stone, “As stiff as any stone” (S21), “As still as any stone” (S21a), “Stone-still” (S21b), “As true as any stone” (S21c), “To stand like a stone” (S21d) are used by Mary, Noah, the Third Son of Noah, the Imperator, the Third Shepherd, Mak, Pilate, Jesus and Luke.
“As bright as the sun” (S22) is used by Lucifer, Mary and Jesus. “As sharp as a thorn” (T6) is used by the Second Shepherd and Mary.

The proverbs and the proverbial comparisons tell us about the everyday lives of the contemporary people; selling and buying (B1, P9, P15); debts (D31); food (B2, B11, B11a, D36, D37, D37b, E3, L5, M2, M6, P14, W10); body (B3, B12, D5, E2, F1, F6, G1, G1a, G8, N1, S9, T7, T8); Christmas game (C7, P8); games (B10, D1); poultry keeping (C3,C5,C6, E4); excrement (A2, D14,D35,F3,M5, M9,T12); cattling and livestock (C10, L1, M10, Sl5); weaving and sowing (N2, N2a, R1, R4, T9, W5, Y1); childraising (C11); farming (F7); clothing (C8, H3, H6, H7, H8, S5, S11, T1); sailing (M1, S1, W12); fishing (N3); money (F4, G7, P4, P5, P16); awareness of the transitory world (F12, N5, P7, R3); allusion to the Hue-and-cry (C14, W15); nature (C2, D32, M7, M7a, N4, S22, S22a, W2, W15); flowers and trees (B7, B8, L4, L4a, L8, T4, T6); animals, birds and insects (B9, C12, D34, F9, F13, P2, W7). “Stafford blue” (S17) recalls a famous place. There are a lot of sayings on women, mostly abusive. Several sayings such as “One’s horn is blown” (H4), “Horn of cuckoldry” (H5), “It is hard to wive and thrive” (T5c), or “Chastise wife’s tongue” (W11) imply unhappy relations between husband and wife.

These expressions are usually used by villains and witless characters. Villainous types familiar to the English stage such as Cain, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Judas, Mak the Thief tend often to use this type of expressions. Their speeches are also adorned with idiomatic phrases and oaths. Such comic characters as Noah’s Wife, the Shepherds, Joseph, who are not evil but are fallen, are also proverb mongers.

Thus, the popular proverbs are employed to characterize the people in the play, and the similes are brought in to enliven and to adorn the speeches of both the bad characters and the good characters. The dramatist might have understood the difference between the proverbs and the
similes, that is proverbial comparisons. If it is so, the proverbs must be distinguished from the mere proverbial comparisons.

In their meanings and styles proverbs are essentially different from similes. They are usually figurative in concealing a hidden meaning and are concerned with wisdom and counsel, however short and pithy they may be. They share with other species of aphoristic expressions. On the other hand, a proverbial comparison, like "As black as coal," or "As clear as crystal," is just descriptive. It does not deliver any wisdom or counsel.

The next problem is that if the dramatists were aware of the difference between proverbs and similes, then why did they put proverbs on the tongues of only the wicked or foolish characters. For since the time of Solomon, both in everyday life and in literature, it is always the wise men or the respectable, elderly person who teach the young through proverbs. A child in the late Middle Ages as well, was taught how to fear God, how to respect his parents and teacher, how to eschew vice, how to spend money wisely, how to deal with friends and even how to choose a wife.

In England extreme zeal for proverbs was seen in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries when many collections and treatises of common English proverbs appeared. It was a time when the English Cycle Plays were having their heyday. And the interest in proverbs was immensely stimulated by the appearance of John Heywood's *A Dialogue containing the number in effect of all the proverbs in the Englishe tongue* (1546), *A hundred Epigrammes* (1550), *Two Hundred Epigrammes* (1555) and *A fourth hundred Epigrams* (1562).

Heywood's *Dialogue* is of particular interest, since it is not a mere collection of proverbs but has a highly organized narrative structure dealing with two manners of marriage. In this narrative, an old man gives
a young man a counsel about marriage. The counsel is transmitted through proverbs. The most familiar expressions which are extensively used are popular, common proverbs which have not Latinate or Biblical origins. These proverbs not only further the narrative structure, but are used as the chief vehicle of the rich sarcasm, irony and wordplay.

As I have already stated, in the Towneley Cycle as well as in the other Cycles, those who are in the habit of using popular proverbs pretend to be wise and full of wisdom and counsel, but they do a foolish thing in transmitting a truth through proverbs. Contrary to their intention their proverbs reveal their damned, fallen nature. Their use of proverbs ironically disclose what they are. For instance, in The First Shepherds’ Play of the Towneley Cycle, the Third Shepherd teaches the other two how to use their wits through proverbs, but he himself turns out to be the greatest fool of the three.

Mak the Thief in The Second Shepherds’ Play disguises his reality by grandiloquently boasting that he is a yeoman of the king and adorns his speeches with proverbs and proverbial sayings. But no one believes his words. In due course he steals a sheep from the Shepherds and is in great danger of losing his life. The Shepherds are also engaged in the wordplay of proverbs and attempting to display wisdom, but they are actually not wise enough even to see through the trick of Mak.

The evil characters in the Passion sequences are frequent users of proverbs. They justify their cruel, unreasonable deeds with proverbs and wise sayings. However, the more they use the proverbs, the more clearly their wicked, evil nature are emphasized. Their verbosity itself reveals their diabolical nature.

Thus, in the Cycle Plays popular proverbs are used to show the damned and fallen quality of the bad characters. The use of proverbs is one of the important attributes of these people. In this respect, they are
pointedly contrasted with the good people who seldom utter a popular proverb. When the dramatic characters use popular proverbs, the contemporary audience might have easily associated them with diabolical powers, or understood their fallen quality.

Joanna Wilson, in the Introduction of The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs, remarks: “In medieval times and later they (proverbs) were constantly on men’s lips as accepted wisdom, in the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth century they were an essential ornament in a fashionable writer or talker’s equipment, until from the end of the seventeenth century onwards they deteriorated into ‘vulgar sayings,’ only fit for ignorant men.” In view of the fact that in the fifteenth century the extent Cycle Plays had already been performed, it is likely that the time when proverbs began to deteriorate and were most commonly uttered by “ignorant men” was much earlier than she assumed.

The medieval dramatists of religious plays were rarely invited to invent original dramatic action. They usually worked with a well known story, and their business was to invent dialogues and to shape the story in the style of drama. In addition, the dramatists of the the Cycle Plays were requested to turn the Biblical stories into the form of play and game as V. A. Kolve remarks in The Play Called Corpus Christi (Stanford, 1966), since these Plays were usually performed at a festive season called Corpus Christi Feast. Popular proverbs were a very useful device for heightening the festive spirit; all the proverb mongers in the Cycle Plays lend themselves to be the objects of derision and laughter of the audience, and succeed in presenting the Biblical world in play and game.

In Table III and Table IV, the numbers of proverbs and similes used in each pageant in the Towneley Cycle and the York Cycle is shown. As it is clear from the tables, in the Towneley Cycle, play II (The Killing of Abel), play III (Noah and the Ark), play XII (The First Shepherds’ Play
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), play XIII (The Second Shepherds’ Play), play XVI (Herod the Great), play XXI (The Buffeting), play XXX (The Judgment) are most distinctive in the density of proverbs. Play XXIII (The Crucifixion), play XXIV (The Talents) and play XXVIII (Thomas of India) come next. The first six pageants are attributed to the “Wakefield Master,” who lived in and near Wakefield, where the Towneley Cycle might have been written and performed. The other four pageants, particularly, the parts composed in a nine-line stanza, are extensively associated with the same dramatist. He favoured the nine-line stanza to which no exact parallel has been found outside the Towneley Cycle. The parts distinguished by him are the highly colloquial idiom and outspoken criticism of contemporary topics, a bold handling of secular material for comic purposes, and extraordinary skill of the characterization, to which the proverbs are a major contribution.

From Table IV, it is clear that play XIII (Joseph’s Trouble about Mary), play XXVI (The Conspiracy), play XXIX (Christ before Annas and Caiaphas), play XXX (Christ before Pilate: the Dream of Pilate’s Wife), play XXXI(Christ before Herod), play XXXIII (Christ before Pilate: Judgment), play XXXV (Crucifixion), play XXXVI (The Death of Christ) are most prominent in the frequency of proverbs. Except for Joseph’s Trouble about Mary, all the pageants are attributed to one dramatist called “York Realist.” For the creation of a powerful sense of atmosphere, and for the achievement of great emotional intensity in dialogue, character and action, the proverbs are effectively used.

Now let us think why Whiting in his Dictionary has missed so many proverbs. A proverbial saying from the Towneley Cycle, “Not to eat any more bread” (B11a) is based on the Acts of the Apostles (23:14), and it is quoted by Whiting. Similar expressions are found in the same Cycle; “Not drink any more” (D37), “Not to have a rest any more” (R2), “Not
to sleep any more" (S10 ), all of which are not recorded by Whiting. If
“Not to eat any more bread” is regarded as a proverb, the other four
expressions should also be recognized as proverbs, since they are nothing
but the versions of the first saying uttered in exactly the same style and
delivering the same meaning. This sort of expression is considerably
missed by Whiting.

One of the Shepherds of The First Shepherds’ Play expresses his
sorrow for the transitory world, and he says, “When ryches is he /Then
comys pouert, hors-man Iak cope /Walkys then” (J1, Collection I). It is
not recorded in Whiting’s Dictionary, but a similar expression is in the
Dialogue by Heywood “Iak out of office she maie byd me walke” (l. 1525
). The saying of the Shepherd seems to be a variation of the proverb
recorded by Heywood.

The Second Shepherd of The Second Shepherds’ Play is noted for his
complaints against his shrewish wife. One of his complaints is “Had She
oones Wett Hyr Whystyll/ She couth Syng cler /Hyr pater noster” (P1
). This complaint seems to have something to do with a saying of the
young man in the Dialogue. He is stricken in poverty. He goes to see his
uncle and aunt to ask for their help but is refused. Then behind her back,
he speaks ill of the aunt and says, “Pattrlyng the diuels pater noster to
erself” ( l. 999 ). This was a popular proverb. There was another
proverbial saying concerning paternoster. It is “To say pater noster,”
which is recorded in The Oxford English Proverbs. The Second Shepherd’s
saying on paternoster could be a version of either the proverb recorded by
Heywood or the proverb recorded by The Oxford English Proverbs.

Lastly, I take up another example of a saying by the same Shepherd.
He is poor but has many children; his wife conceives almost every year.
He laments the marital state, saying, “Sely capyle, oure hen /both to and
fro/She kakyll; Bot begun she to crok, To groyn or to clok, Wo is hym
of oure cok; ffor he is in the shekyls" (C3 ). Contrary to his lamentation, when a hen lays an egg, there is no one who is not pleased with it. This is a widely recognized truth. And there was a popular proverb on it. "Hen is dear when she lays, loath when she says <cluck> ." But our Shepherd opposes this idea; he is not happy when his hen lays an egg, for it means that he has to bear a heavier burden, namely a larger family. Under this circumstance, it is likely that his saying is a parody of the popular saying on a hen. He uses the same terminology as that of the popular saying on a hen, but twists its meaning.

The most difficult task accompanying the proverb hunting is to discover the proverbs which might have been a version or a parody of a true proverb. Even if similar parallels are found, there is no means to judge whether they are closely related or not. All that could be said is that when sayings were incorporated in literary or dramatic works, the authors did not hesitate to make changes suggested by context, application, rhyme, or meter. They went further to twist the meanings of the original expressions to make their language lively. What are in their works might not be in the form which the author inherited, but in the form which he has changed for his convenience.

Proverbs, proverbial expressions, similes and idiomatic phrases in the Towneley Cycle

TP= The Towneley Plays, ed. George England (London, EETS, 1897)
Heywood= A Dialogue of Proverbs, ed. R. E. Habenicht (Los Angels, 1963)
q. Whiting= quoted in Whiting
# simils
& idiomatic expressioes

A1 Amend while you can
Lazarus; Amende the, man, Whils thou may (TP XXXI, 174,181,182,189,197)

A2 As a man wipese his Arse
* Cain; Not as mekill, grete ne small, as he myght wipe his ars with all (TP XI, 237-8; cf. As a man wypyth his ars he doth nothing ellys, Whiting A194)

B1 To Buy a Bargain
Mak; Pfor he might aby the bargan if it were told At the endyng (TP XIII, 272-3; cf. Whiting B82. a1352)
Nuncius; Be he never so bold byes he that bargan, Twelf thousand fold (TP XVI, 21-2; Some bargains dere bought, good chepe wold be sold, Heywood. 439)
3 Pastor; Light chepe tetherly for-yeldys (TP XIII, 170-1; q. Whiting C166. e1250: Heywood 439)
2 Tortor; Lett all this bargan be syn alloure toyles ar before (TP XXII, 356)
(YP B1)

B2 Not worth a Bean
1 Tortor; All is not worth a beyn (TP XXIII, 527; q. Whiting B92. e1300: Heywood 735)
(YP B3)

B3 To make one’s Beard
3 Miles; I had made thaym a berd (TP XVI, 189; q. Whiting B116. e1380)

B4 Bear the Bell
Garcio; Ye thre bere the bell (TP XII, 186; q. Whiting B230. e1303: Heywood 676; York XXVI, 195)
Herod; Ye bere the bel (TP XVI, 197; q. Whiting B230)
(YP B4)

B5 Bite and whine
Noah; Thou can both byte and whyne, with a rend (TP III, 229-30; Tilley B427; Heywood 2032)

B6 To beat Black and Blue
Noah’s Wife; And I am bet so blo That I may not thryfe (TP III, 413-4)
Pilate; Beat hym blak and bloo (TP XXII, 126; q. Whiting B329, only this example)
cf. Johannes; That high on the tre thus hyngys alone with body blak blo (TP XXIII, 345-6)
Cleopa; Blo thou bett hym bare his brest thou maide all blak (TP XXVII, 15), Bete his body blo (TP XXVII, 30)
(cf. YP B6)
B7 To blow a cold Blast
   Mak; Bot I com or thy ryse els blawes a cold blast (TP XIII, 344; q.
   Whiting B 341, only this example)

B8 As bright as a Blossom on brier
   * Joseph; As blossom bright on bogh (TP XV, 71; q. Whiting B376. c1350)

B9 To whet like a Boar
   * 3 Miles; I mon whett lyke a bore (TP XVI, 318; q. Whiting B 407. 1420)

B10 It is a good Bourd (jest) to drink of
   a gourd
   Joseph; It is an old by-worde, It is good bowrde, for to drynk of a gowrde
   (TP XII, 481-3; q. Whiting B475, only this example)

B11 As ever one eats Bread
   * Noah’s Wife; As euer eet brede (TP III, 395; see B11a)
   * Syrinus; As ete I brede (TP IX, 182)
   * 2 Miles; As euer eet I breed (TP XX, 622)

B11a Not To eat any more Bread
   3 Pastor; Shall I neuer eet bred sothe to I wytt (TP XIII, 468; q.
   Whiting B520. c1400; Acts 23:14;
   Pilate; Shall he aby with bytter baylls or lett bred (TP XX, 124-5)
   Caiaphas; Shall I neuer eet bred to that he be stald In the stokys (TP
   XXI, 203; see D37, R1 & S11)
   (YP B14)

B12 To have brows like Bristles
   * 2 Pastor; She is brouyd lyke a brystulle (TP XII, 102; q. Whiting B553
   c1375)

C1 One’s own Chorister
   1 Demon; Thou art myn awne querestur i.e., I recognize you as one of my
   follower (TP XXX, 209)

C2 Cloud & proud
   1 Pastor; He will make it as prowde a lord as he were. With a hede lyke a
   clowde ffelterd his here (TP XII, 64-5)
   Tutiillius; She can make it full prowde with japes and with gynnes. hir
   hede as hy as a clowde but no shame of hir synnes Thai fele (TP XXX,
   262-4; cf. As high as a cloud, Whiting C317; He that is proud is often
   shamed, Whiting P426. c1340)

C3 Cluck & hen
   2 Pastor; Sely capyle.oure hen both to and fro She kakyels. Bot begyn she
   to crok. To groyne or to clok. Wo is hym is of oure cok. ffor he is in the
   shekyls (TP XIII, 67-72; cf. The hen is dear when she lays, loath when
   she says “cluck,” Whiting H342. 1450)

C4 As black as Coal
   * 1 Demon; Now ar we waxen blak as any coyll (TP I, 136; q. Whiting C324.
   c1225)

C5 To hop like Cocks in a croft
   Froward; We must hop and dawnse As cokys in a croft (TP XXI, 354-5; q.
   Whiting C355, only this example)
C6 First Cock of a young lad
Mak; Welner at the fyrst cok of a yong lad, ffor to mend our e flok (TP XIII, 387-8; cf. Many an old cock maintains his flock but all our eggs come from the young cock, Whiting C352. c1475; The young cocke croweth, as he the olde hereth, Heywood 558)

C7 Cock's comb
Caianphas; Kyng copyn in our game thus shall I indew the, ffor a fatur (TP XXI, 186-7; cf. To wear a cock's comb, Whiting C357; Heywood 1764)

C8 To pay one on the Cote
3 Miles; I shall pay thaym on the cote (TP XVI, 326; q. Whiting C343, only this example; see T1)
2 Miles; I payd them on the cote (TP XVI, 421)

C9 Counsel
Mak; Bot he nedys good counsell. That fayn wold fare weyll, And has bot lytill spendyng (TP XIII, 275-7)

C10 One is horned like a Cow
Tutiuillus; She is hornyd like a kow (TP XXX, 269; How be it to go sendth the shrewd cow short hornes, Heywood 671)

C11 First Creep and then walk
2 Pastor; Ffyrst must vs crepe and sythen go (TP XII, 100; q. Whiting C202. c1443; Heywood 834 & 941)
1 Pastor; kynde will crepe where it may not go (TP XIII, 591-2)

C12 To have a Crow to pull
Cain; We have a caw to pull (TP II, 311; q. Whiting C572, first entry; Hey Heywood 1846)

C13 To bear a Crown
Herod; If I bere this crowne (TP XVI, 431; q. Whiting C576. c1475), I may do what I shall. And bere vp my crowne (TP XVI, 476-7)

C14 Cry (allusion to hue-and-cry)
Mak; And make a fowll noyse. And cry out apon me (TP XIII, 429-30; see W14)

C15 As clear as Crystal
† Joseph; She is as clenе as cristall clyfe (TP X, 308; q. Whiting C588. a100)
† Mary; Thy en as cristall clere (TP XXIII, 381)
(YP C2)

D1 That Dance is done
Pharaoh; ffy on hvm! nay, nay, that dwance is done (TP VIII, 238; q. Whiting D9; YP XI, 225, first entry)
(YP D1)

D2 Devil in a band
Noah's Wife; Then may we be here, the dewill in a bande (TP XIII, 407; q. Whiting D1805, only this example)
1 Miles; Siche thre knyghtys had lytill drede To bynde the dwill that we on call. In need (TP XX, 632-4)

D3 Devil in one's brains
# Herod; What the dewill is in thare harnes? (TP XIV, 301; see D24)
(cf. YP D11)
D4. Devil dead by the gate
   3 Pastor; Seldom lys the deyll died by the gate (TP XIII, 229; q. Whiting
   D202, first entry; cf. The dewill is deade, Heywood 2433)

D5. Devil's dirt in one's beard
   Caiphas; The dwilys durt in thi berd (TP XXI, 170; cf Whiting D201. 1402;
   cf Therby the fat cleane flyt fro my berde, Heywood 154)

D6. Devil draw you to hell
   # Pilate; To hell the dwill shall draw you, Body, bak and bone (TP XXIII, 20),
   The devill to hell harry hys goost (TP XXVI, 35), The devill the all to-
   draw (TP XXVI, 506)
   (YP D5)

D7. Devil drown you
   # Pharaoh; The devill the drowne (TP VIII, 253)
   (YP D6)

D8. Devil in the eye
   # 2 Pastor; Mak, the devill in your ee (TP XIII, 217)

D9. Devil give you ....
   # Caiphas; Speke on in a torde the dwill giff the shame (TP XXI, 148), The
   dwill giff the shame (TP XXI, 163), The dwill gyf hym care (TP XXI, 308)

D10. To Go to the devil (of hell)
     Cain; Go to the dwill, and say I bad (TP II, 94; q. Whiting D197, only this
     example)
     Pharaoh; Weynd the to the devyll of hell (TP VIII, 223)
     (YP D7)

D11. The devil have his bones
     # Caiphas; The dwill haue his bonys (TP XXI, 441; cf. The diuell hath caste
     a bone to set strife, Heywood 1494)

D12. Devil hang him up to dry
     # Garrio; The dwill hang hym vp to dry (TP II, 13)
     # 3 Pastor; The deyll myght hym hang (TP XII, 210)
     # Herod; The dwill the hang (TP XIV, 265), The dwill hang you high to dry
     (TP XIV, 455). The devill me hang and draw (TP XVI, 132)
     # Pilate; The dwill, he hang you high to dry (TP XX, 162)
     (YP D8)

D13. To have one in the Devil's hand
     # Pilate; Where in the dwill hand had we the? (TP XX, 181; see D28)

D14. To Kiss the Devil's arse
     # Cain; Kys the dwillis toute (TP II, 63), Com kys the dwill right in the
     ars (TP II, 287)

D15. Devil knock out the brains
     # Mak; The devill knok outt thare harnes (TP XIII, 392)

D16. Devil in the maw (= belly)
     # 2 Pastor; Yee, the dewill in thi maw so tarland (TP XIII, 110)

D17. In the Devil's name
     # Cain; In the dwilys name Before (TP II, 147), Now bren, In the dwilys
     name (TP II, 278)
     # Pharaoh; Pestilence in the dwilys name (TP VIII, 358)
D18 Raged Devil
# Pharaoh; What, ragyd the dwyll of hell, alys you so to cry? (TP VIII, 304).
  The ragyd! the dwyll! (TP VIII, 337), The ragyd dwyll, we dronwe! (TP VIII, 414)

D19 Devil's Pain
# Pilate; This is the dwylls payn (TP XX, 140)

D20 Devil's Service
  Consultus; He lygys here in the dwylls servyce (TP XXIV, 178)

D21 Devil speed you
# Garcia; The dwyll you spede (TP I, 4)
# Cain; The dwyll me spede if I haue hast (TP II, 135), The dwyll hym spede
  that me taht (TP II, 151), The dwyll me spede (TP II, 234)
# Herod; The dwyll the spede, and me (TP XVI, 226)
# Pilate; The dwyll you spede (TP XX, 736), Peassee in the dwylls name (TP XXIII, 9)
  The devyll the sped (TP XXIV, 223)
    (YP D10)

D22 Devil skald you
# Pilate; The dwyll skald you (TP XX, 4)

D23 Stinks like the Devil
# Cain; It stank like the dwyll in hell (TP II, 283; q. Whiting, D206. c1375)

D24 Devil of the War (=bad time)
# Hak; Then myght I by, for all the pak, The dewyll of the war (TP XIII, 330-1; Lydus 291.28)

D25 In the (twenty) Devil's Way
  Cain; Sit downe in the devyll way (TP II, 88; q. Whiting, D218. c1200). Come
downe in twenty dwyll way (TP II, 439; q. Whiting, D219. c1330)
  Herod; In twenty dwyll way (TP XIV, 405; q. Whiting D219)
  Pilate; Go hens in twenty dwyll way (TP XX, 200; q. Whiting D219)
    (YP D12)

D26 If the Devil swore
# Imperator; In certain, had the dwyll hit sworne, that gadlyng shuld agane
  (TP IX, 83-4)
# Herod; If the dwyll of hell had sworne, he shall agane (TP XIV, 317-8)
    (YP D14)

D27 If he were the Devil
# Imperator; He shall neuer dystroy my lawes, were he the dwyll of hell (TP IX, 95-6)

D28 What (who, where) the Devil (varied)
# Cain; What dwyll of hell is it? (TP II, 279)
# 3 pastor; What the dwyll is this? (TP XIII, 585)
# 1 Pastor; What dwyll shall he hatt? (TP XIII, 604)
# Herod; What the dwyll is in thel harnes? (TP XIV, 301), What the dwyll
  (TP XIV, 307), Who the dwyll mad hym knyght? (TP XIV, 312)
# Pilate; What dwyll will he be there? (TP XX, 118), Where in the dwyll
  hand had we the? (TP XX, 181)
D29 Devil ails one
# Tortor; What dwill so ever he ayll? (TP XXIII, 299)
# Herod; I wote not what dewill me alys (TP XVI, 114)
(YP D16)

D30 Devil (varied)
# Imperator; Downe fell! dewill! (TP IX, 73). A, fy, and dewyll!(TP IX, 76)
# Herod; The dewill! (TP XIV, 283). Dewylls on thame all thre! (TP XIV, 290)
Fy on dewylls! (TP XIV, 308). What dewyll! (TP XVI, 118). Ffy on the
dewyll (TP XVI, 150). Ffy! dewill! (TP XVI, 174). Bot adew! to the
dewyll! (TP XVI, 512)
# 1 miles; The dewyll haue my saull! bot I be fyrrst sene (TP XVI, 407)
# Pilate; Yei, dewill! (TP XX, 106). The dewyll! (TP XX, 156)
# 2 Tortor; Ffy.fy, on thise dyse the devill! I theym take! (TP XXIV, 377)
(YP D17)

D31 Not to Die in one's Debt
Pilate; I shall not dy in youre dett (TP XXIV, 195; q. Whiting D114. a1450)

D32 As one feels the Dew
# Froward; As feill l the dew (TP XXI, 359)

D33 In the Dike
3 Pastor; Poore men ar in the dyke. and ofe tyme mars (TP XII, 93; q.
Whiting D247. first entry. My beautiful marriage is in the dyke, Heywood
131 & Snowe is white And lieth in the dike, Heywood 1624-5)

D34 As a Dog in the dike
# Lazarus: Stynke as dog in dyke (TP XXXI, 146; see D23)

D35 From Door to midden
Noah's Wife; I will not, for thi bydying, go from doore to mydyng (TP III,
375-6; q. Whiting D351. only this example)

D36 Drink as we brew
Mak; We must drynk as we brew. And that is bot reson (TP XIII, 501-2; q.
Whiting D529. 1264; Heywood 430)
cf.2 Pastor; He has done vs greuance therfor shall he drynk (TP XXI, 39;
see D33b)

D37 Not to Drink any more
3 Pastor; Nor drynk in my heede with hym tyll I mete (TP XIII, 469; cf.
B11a; R2 & S10)

D37a What is Drink without meat
3 Pastor; What is drynk without mete (TP XII, 194; q. Whiting D398, only this
example)

D37b To Drink woe
2 Tortor; He has done vs greuance therfor shall he drynk (TP XXI, 39; cf.
Whiting D 397. 1300 & D405)

E1 Both on Earnest and on derision
# 2 Tortor; Both on ernest and on hethynge. This cote I wold I had (TP XXIV,
139-40; To broyd hym with it in earnest or scof, Heywood 1810 & 2320)

E2 To be worth one's Ears
Herod; Had ye bene with youre eres (TP XVI, 165; q. Whiting E11. a1376)
E3 As fresh as an Eel
   #1 Pastor: As fresh as an eyl (TP XII, 356)

E4 It is to far to tell an Egg to go
   3 Pastor: It is to far to hyd hyte To an eg or it go (TP XII, 150-1; q.
   Whiting E51, only this example)

F1 Double Face
   1 Demon; Bot before hym he prase hym, behynude he mys-sase hym, Thus dowbll
   he mase hym, thus do thai today (TP XXI, 157-60; cf. Whiting F5, P6, F8, F12)
   cf. None better to beare two faces in a hood, Heywood 560

F2 Fair and soft men go far
   Cain; I have gone ofte on softer wise (TP II, 162)
   Anna; All soft may men go far (TP XXI, 211; q. Whiting F17, c1385)
   Pilate; Ffar and softly (TP XXIV, 209; q. Whiting F17)
   (YP F2)

F3 Not to set a fart
   Cain; Bi all men set I not a fart (TP II, 369; q. Whiting F61, first entry;
   Heywood Epigram 138.86.6; see P6 & F9)

F4 Not worth a Farthing
   2 Pastor: I trow not one farthing (TP XII, 572; see Whiting F65; Heywood
   637)

F5 As bright as Fire
   # Nuncio; By a starne as bright as fyre This kyng thay knew (TP XIV, 287-8;
   q. Whiting F162, a1425)

F5a To behave like Fire
   # Herod; With-in I fare as fyre (TP XVI, 101)

F6 Flesh with flesh
   Daniel; Fflesh with fleshe will be boght, That he lose not that he has
   wroght wyth his awne hend (TP VII, 229-231; Eye for an eye. Exodus 21:24)

F6a As small as Flesh to the pot
   # Herod; If ye do. I clefe you small as flesh to pott (TP XVI, 98-9; q.
   Whiting F270, c1400)

F7 As fallow as the Floor
   #1 Pastor; The tylthe ofoure landy lyys falow as floore (TP XIII, 13; q.
   Whiting F286, only this example)

F8 As fair as the Flower
   # Mary; Thi face with blode is red, Was fare as floure in feylyde (TP XXIII,
   323-4; q. Whiting F304, c1300)

F9 Not to set a Fly wing
   2 Tortor; He setlys not a flie wyng (TP XXI, 94; q. Whiting F356, only this
   example; see F2)

F10 As ugly as a Fool
   #1 Demo; Vgly, tatyrd as a foyll (TP I, 137; q. Whiting F358, c1375)

F11 Fools of Gotham
   Garcia; Sagh I neuer none se fare but the foles of Gotham (TP XII, 180; q.
   Whiting G406, only this example)
F12 Fortune's wheel
2 Tortor; As fortune assyse men will she make; hir maners ar nyse she can
downe and vptake; And rych She turnes vp-so-downe, And vnder abone, Most
chefe of renowne She castys in the dyche (TP XXIV, 378-85; q. Whiting
F523. a1338; the world roth on whales, Heywood 2057)

F13 Let the geese beware, when the Fox preeches
Cain; Let furth youre geyse, the fox will preche (TP II, 84; q. Whiting
F605. a1450; Heywood 2180)

G1 To have one's Gall burst
Herod: Bot I kyll hym and his I wote I brast my gall (TP XVI, 301; q.
Whiting G13. a1450), So light is my saull, that all of Sugar is my gall
(TP XVI, 474-5; cf. Whiting G12. c1390),
3 Tortor; That he shall soyn yele the gast, ffor brestyn is his gall (TP
XXIII, 588-9; q. Whiting G13)

G1a To have a galon of Gall
2 Pastor; She has a galon of gall (TP XIII, 106)

G2 Gift mares many men
Caiphas; Bot gyfts marres many man (TP XXI, 439; q. Whiting G 69. only this
example; cf. Riches bryngth ofte harme, Heywood 1212)

G3 As brittle as the Glass
* 3 Pastor; And brekyll as glas (TP XIII, 121; q. Whiting G109. a1200)

G4 To shine like any Glass
* 1 Tortor; It shouyn as any glas (TP XXIV, 83; q. Whiting G 124. a1300)

G5 God's forbot
* Cardic; Godis forbot (TP II, 38)
* Cain; Godis forbot (TP II, 184)
* 1 Pastor; Godys forbot (TP XII, 271)
* 1 Tortor; Godys forbot (TP XXI, 409)

G6 To greeve may not amend
Joseph: It is no boytt to grete, truly withouten trayn; Oure bayll it may
not boytt but well more make oure payn (TP XV, 92-5; cf. Whiting D337.
c1420, G455. c1300, M729. c1425; see M8 & S14a)

G7 Not worth a Great
1 Miles; I hold here a grote she lykys me not weyll Be we parte (TP XVI,
326-9; cf. Whiting G474. 1469; Heywood 965 & 1784; see F3)

G8 To drive out one's Guts
* Herod; My gutys with out thryng Bot i this lad hyng (TP XVI, 240-1),
cf. Bot I kyll hym and his I wote I brast my gall (TP XVI, 301)

H1 Even a good wife strokes the Hay
Cain: Euen the good wife strokkit the hay (TP II, 88; cf. Wisp of hay, TP II,
438; "wisp of hair," "stroke with the hair," "stroke against the hair"
were common usages. So "hay" of Cayn's speech refers seemingly to privy
parts of women)

H2 Hurl'd like a Hog
* Tulluiulus; His hede is like a stowke hurlyd as hoggys (TP XXX, 315; cf.
Whiting H404. a1300; cf. A sleepe by routyng like a hog, Heywood 739)
H3 To Go with a riven Hood
Cain: Then myght I go with a ryffen hood, And it is better hold that I haue then go from doore to doore & craue (TP II, 141-3; q. Whiting H453. c1450)

H4 One's Horn is blown
Tuttiullus; My horne is blawn (TP XXX, 250; q. Whiting H485. c1386)

H5 Horn of cuckoldry
3 Pastor; Sagh I neuer in credyll A hornyd lad or no (TP XIII, 600; q. Whiting H483. a1400)
Tuttiullus; She is hornyd like a kowe... for syn (TP XXX, 269)

H6 To go with broken shoes and torn Hoses
Cain: What nede had I my travell to lose, to were my shoyn & ryfe my hose? (TP II, 152-3; She gothe with broken shone and torne hose, Heywood 1010)

H7 To wear a Hose
Noah's Wife; Take the ther a langett To tye vp thi hose (TP III, 224-5; "to wear horses=brechees" was proverbial to assume the authority of the husbnd; Shall the maister weare a breeche, Heywood 1516)

H8 One's heart is in the Hose
2 Pastor; Thy hart is in thy hose (TP XII, 424; q. Whiting H295, first entry; Heywood 928)

I1 Illa hail
Pharaoh; Wyth ylahayill (TP VIII, 258; cf. Whiting S350)
Caiaphas; Illa-hayill thou borne (TP XXI, 136)
Froward; I may syng ylla-hayill (TP XXI, 375; q. Whiting S350, only this example)
2 Tortor; Now ylla hale was he borne (TP XXIII, 563)
(YP II)

J1 Horse-man Jack out of office
1 Pastor; When ryches is he Then comys pouerte, hors-man lak cope Walkys then, I weyn (TP XII, 15-8; lak out of office she maie byd me walke, Heywood 1525)

J2 Jack and Gill
Noah's Wife; For lak nor for gill will I turne my face (TP III, 336; q. Whiting I2. first entry; Heywood 1514)

K1 To knit a Knot
David; Loke ye do it well in wrytt, And theron a knot knytt, ffor it is prophecy (TP VII, 106-8; q. Whiting K97. c1405)
1 Tortor; When it is well won knyt a knot fast (TP XXI, 391)
(YP K2)

L1 As meek as a Lamb
* Cleopas; As a lamb meke was he ay (TP XXVII, 52)

L2 Worse people worse Laws
1 Demon; The longere that day dawes--- "Wars pepill wars lawes"(TP XXX, 194-5)
Proverbs in Medieval English Drama

L3 As heavy as any Lead
- Abraham: If that my hert wax hevy as leyde (TP IV, 82; q. Whiting L123, a750)
- Thomas: My hart is hevy as led (TP XXVIII, 210; q. Whiting L123)
- Octave: Thyne absens gars thi saull be shent and makys the hevy as led (TP XXVIII, 299)
- Martha: We ar hevy as any lede (TP XXXI, 71; q. Whiting L123)
(YP L3)

L4 As light as a Leaf
- 1 Pastor; As light I me feyll As leyfe on a tre (TP XIII, 357-8; q. Whiting L140, a1400)
- Mary Magdalene; I am as light as leyfe on tre (TP XXVI, 623; q. Whiting L140)
(YP L4)

L4a To quake like a Leaf
- Maria: Mi flesh it quakys as lefe on lynde (TP XXIX, 360; q. Whiting L146, a1400)

L5 Not worth a Leek
Lucifer: Therof a leke what rekys vs (TP I, 129)
Abel: This is not worth oone leke (TP II, 285; q. Whiting L185, c1300)

L6 To Lick on the whip
Noah: Ye shall lik on the whip (TP III, 378; OED v 3, first entry)

L7 No Light makes the moon
1 Pastor: No light make the mone (TP XII, 433; cf. Every light is not the sun, Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs 463)

L8 To be like the Lily
- Lazarus: Yore lire the lylly lyke (TP XXXI, 145; q. Whiting L281, a1350)

M1 To stand up like a Mast
- 3 Tortor: A, it standys vp lyke a mast (TP XXIII, 232; q. Whiting M400, c1300)

M2 As sweet as Mead
- Jesus: Luf rasid me thrug his pauste it is swetter then med (TP XXVIII, 111; q. Whiting M431, a135)
(YP M1)

M3 To quit with the same Measure
Garcio: Yai. with the same measure and weight That I b ro will I qwite (TP II, 51-2; q. Whiting M455, only this example)

M4 Good Mending short ending
- 2 Pastor: And send thee my good mending With a short endyng (TP XII, 78-9; q. Whiting M500, first entry)

M5 In the Mire
- 1 Pastor I am very, for-rakyd and run in the myre (TP XIII, 256; cf. Whiting M573; Lay my credence in the myre, Heywood 1493; see D 29)
cf. Mak; Ye haue ryn in the myr and ar weytyt (TP XIII, 494)
- 3 Demon: Bot if this draught be well drauen don is in the myre (TP XXX, 204-5)
(YP M2)
M6 As white as Milk
* Tutiullius: Yore nek abowe as mylke (TP XXX, 324; see Whiting M545. c1000)

M7 As round as the Moon
* Mak: A serkyll as rownde as moyn (TP XIII, 278; q. Whiting M649. only this example)

M7a Bark at the Moon
  2 Pastor: Can ye bark at the mone (TP XIII, 662; q. Whiting M654. 1402; Feare may force a man to cast beyonde the moone, Heywood 226; see S 22a)

M8 Mourning may not amend
  Joseph: Bot mowrnyng. mary, may not amende (TP XVIII, 202; q. Whiting M729. a1425; see G 6 & S 14a)
  John: Yore mowrnyng may not amende (TP XXII, 300)
  Mary Magdalene: All youre mowrnyng in feyr may not his sorrow sese (TP XXII 312)
  (YP M3)

M9 To wither away like Muck upon mold
* Noah: As muk apon mold I widder away (TP III, 62-3; q. Whiting M799. only this example)

M10 Mutton is a good meat for glutton
  2 Pastor: Moton of an ewe that was roton, good mete for a gloton (TP XII, 220-222; q. Whiting M813. first entry)
  2 Demon: Thai will tell no tales bot se so thai quakke ffor moton; he that to that gam gose, Now namely on old tose (TP XXX, 589-92; see T 7)

N1 One's sin in his Neck
  Tutiullius: Yore synnes in youre nekkes (TP XXX, 555; q. Whiting N43. c1385)

N2 Not to eat an Needle
  3 Pastor: lete not an nedyl (TP XIII, 233; q. Whiting N67. only this example)

N2a Not worth a Needle
  Cain: Then was myne not worth a nedd (TP II, 123; q. Whiting N69. a1200)

N3 Fish before the Net
  3 Pastor: Ye fysh before the net (TP XII, 139; q. Whiting N91. a1449; Heywood 979)

N4 As dark as any Night
* Jesus: Ther ever mor is dark as nyght (TP XXVIII, 345; q. Whiting N103. a1393)

N5 Now in this Now in that
  1 Pastor: Now in hart, now in heyll: now in weytt, now in blast, Now in care. Now in comforth agane. Now is fayre, now is rane. Now in hart full fane, And after full sare (TP XII, 4-9; q. Whiting N179. c1000: Heywood 1417-8)
  1 Pastor: In Stormes and tempest, Now in the est, now in the west, wo is hym has neuer rest Myd day nor morow (TP XIII, 4-9)
  2 Pastor: Now in dry, now in wete, Now in smaw, now in slete (TP XIII, 60-61)
  3 Pastor: Now in weyll. now in wo. And all thyng wrythyng (TP XIII, 125-6)
  Mak's Wife: It is reythe to beholde. Now in hote, now in colde (TP XIII, 418-9)
N6 Nothing is impossible for God's will
1 Pastor; Nothing is imposybyll soothly, that god wil (TP XII, 372-3; Oxford 580; cf. Nothing is impossible to a willyng herte, Heywood 228; see T 13)

P1 To Sing one's Pater Noster
2 Pastor; Had She-ones Wett Hyr Whystyll She couth Syng full clere Hyr pater noster (TP XII, 103-4; Patryng the dyuels pater noster to herself, Heywood 998; He maie be in my Pater noster in dede. But be sure, he shall neuer come in my Creede, Heywood 2571-2)

P2 As proud as a Peacock
#1 Pastor; Ther shall come a swane as proude as a po (TP XIII, 37; see Whiting P71. a1500, P73. 1480)
# Thomas; If that I proude as pacok go (TP XXVIII, 168)

P3 Not to rise to win a Penny
Noah's Wife; I hope not I myght Ryse a penny to wyn (TP XIII, 298-9; cf. Whiting P119. c1382)

P4 Mass Penny
Noah's Wife; Ffor thi saull, without lese shoul I delys penny doyyl (TP III, 390)
Mak; To gyff all in my cofer To mowe at next to offer hyr hed-mas penny (XIII, 250-2)
Cf. To be det penyold (F. Weaver Wells Wills <1890> 25.xv.1530; OED peny sb12)

P5 As proud as Pennyless
Tutulius; As proude as pennyles his slefe has no poket (TP XXX, 236; q. Whiting P110, only this example)

P6 Not to set at a Pin
Noah's Wife; Set I not at a pyn (TP III, 364; q. Whiting P212. only this example; see F2 & F8)

P7 After Play comes sorrows
1 Pastor; After oure play com sorrows vnryde (TP XII, 11; q. Whiting P255, only this example)

P8 To teach one a new Play of Yule
1 Tortor; We shall teche hym, I wote a new play of yoyll (TP XXI, 344; q. Whiting P259, only this example)

P9 To give one the Price
1 tortor; I gyf hym the pryce (TP XXI, 81; cf Whiting P372)

P10 When it comes to the Prick
Anna; Was ther neuer man so wyk bot he myght amende, when it com to the pryk right as youre self kend (TP XXI, 282-3; q. Whiting P374. c1390)
1 Demon; I trowd it drew here the prike (TP XXX, 370; q. Whiting P374; Ye shoote ny the pricke, Heywood 323)

P11 The Pot goes so long to the water
Noah's Wife; So long goys the pott to the water, men says, At last comys it home broken (TP XII, 317-9; q. Whiting P323. 1340; Heywood 2174-5; cf. neither pot broken, ner yet water spylt, Heywood 1145 & My pot is whole, and my water cleane, Heywood 2194)

P12 Praise at the parting
1 Pastor; Prays at the partyng (TP XII, 267; q. Whiting P39. 1450)
1 Demon; Prase at the partyng (TP XXX, 584; q. Whiting P39)
P13 Pride
1 Pastor; he that most may When he syttys in pryde, When it comys on assay is kesten downe wyde (TP XII, 12-3; Therefore I warne the, Lucifer, this pride will turne to great distresse Chester I, 119-20)

P14 Pudding in the pot
Caiaphas; He gettis more by purches Then bi his frere rent (TP XXI, 161-2; q. Whiting P438, c1387-95)

P15 One's Purchase is better than one's rent
Caiaphas; He gettis more by purches Then bi his fre rent (TP XXI, 161-2; q. Whiting P438, c1387-95)

P16 Penniless Purse
1 Pastor; I may syng With purs penneles, That makys this heynes, Wo is me this dystreses (TP XII, 32-5; q. Whiting P456, 1449; see S7)

R1 To raise a Reek
2 Pastor; She can raise vp reek if she be well nettyld (TP XXX, 168-9; q. Whiting R76, a1450)
(YP R1)

R2 Not to have a rest any more
2 Pastor; I wyll rest in no stede tyll that I hym grete (TP XIII, 470; see B11a, D37 & S10)

R3 After Riches comes poverty
1 Pastor; When ryches is he, Then comys pouer, hors-man lak cope Walkys then, I weyn (TP XII, 15-8; cf. Whiting R119; see J1)

R4 To have more tow on one's Rock
Noah's Wife; Till I have on this hill span a space on my rok (TP III, 337-8)
Mak; I have tow on my rok more then ever I had (TP XIII, 389; q. Whiting T432, c1390; Heywood 1930)

S1 Sain
1 Pastor; I shal set the on sayll (TP XII, 258; Noise up saile, Heywood 503)

S2 To multiply as many as the Sands
* Jacob; To multiplye my seede as sand of see (TP VI, 70; see Whiting S55. 887)

S3 A false Scolde hand at last
3 Pastor; A false skaide hang at the last (TP XIII, 596)

S4 To cast All at six and Seven
1 Pastor; By my wytt to fynde to cast the world in seuen (TP XII, 38; q. Whiting S359, c1385; Heywood 981)
Herod; I shall, and that in hy set all on sex and seuen (XVI, 128) cf. Mary; Rewarde you this day as he set all on seuen (XII, 487). That sett all on seuen, his son has he sent (TP XIII, 738)
2 Tortor; Seuen is bot the seconde, the sothe for to say (XXVI, 332)

S5 To go clout your Shoes
Noah's Wife; Go cloute thi shone (TP III, 353; q. Whiting S259, only this example)
Proverbs in Medieval English Drama

S6 Shrew can paint
3 Pastor: I trow the shrew can paynt (TP XIII, 210; see W16f)

S7 To Sing "alas" (a song or care)
Pharaoh: Ful soyn hys song shall be "alas" (TP VIII, 141; q. Whiting S466. c1300)
Mary: Alas! may euer be my sang (TP XXIII, 406; q. Whiting S466). Sore syyngyn is my sang (TP XXIII, 429)
Caiaphas: Of care may thou syng! (TP XXI, 129; q. Whiting S473, first entry)
cf. see 11
(YP S3)

S8 Sit still
1 Pastor: It is better syt still then rise vp and fall (TP XXI, 28; q. Whiting S355, first entry; Heywood 1788)

S9 My heart is out of Skin
1 Pastor: My hart is out of skyn (TP XIII, 360; see Whiting S363. c1300)

S10 Not to Sleep any more
2 Pastor: I never slepe one nuyght There I do anothere (TP XIII, 475-6; see B11a, D37 & R1)

S11 His Sleeve has no pocket
Tutuillus: As prowde as pennyles His sleepe has no poket, fful redles (TP XXX, 236; see P4)

S12 As white as any Snow
* Moses: As whyte as snaw was his body (TP XXV, 81; q. Whiting S437. a900)
(YP S5)

S13 Sod
1 Pastor: As heuy as a sod I grete with myn eene (TP XII, 21; q. Whiting S456. only this example)

S14 I pray a Sorrow
3 Pastor: Tytter want ye sowill then sorow I pray (TP XII, 152)

S14a Sorrow helps not
John: Ther may no sorow hym safe (TP XXII, 287). I red thi sorowe thou slake. Thi Wepyn gyn not gyn (TP XXIII, 356-7; Coventry 65.1022). cf.
Whiting S514; see G6 & M8

S14b Sorrow at the parting if laughter at meeting
3 Pastor: Thus sorow is at partyng at metyng if ther be laughte (TP XXIV, 397; q. Whiting S515, first entry)

S15 If it were a Sow...
1 Pastor: And it were for soogh Ther is drynk enogh (TP XII, 274-5; cf.
Sow-drunk, Whiting S534. 1529; as drunk as a sow)

S17 Stafford blue
Noah's Wife: You were worthi be ciely In Stafford blew (TP III, 200; q.
Whiting S654, first entry)

S18 As true as you Stand
* Mary Magdalene: It is as trewe as ye stand thare (TP XXVIII, 54; see Whiting S667. c1497)
S19 He learned timely to steal. ...
1 Pastor; He lernyd timely to steyll that couth not say nay (TP XII, 524; q. Whiting S693, only this example)

S20 As hard as any steel
* Thomas; Bot my hart is harde as stele (TP XXVIII, 225 & 258; q. Whiting S699. c1175)
( cf. YP S8 )

S20a As stable as any steel
* 1 Angel; Syn thou art stablyss as any steyll (TP XIX, 70; q. Whiting S701. a1325)

S20b As true as any steel
* Deus; Thou was alway well wrirkand to me trew as stele (TP III, 120; q. Whiting S709. c1300)
* Hak; And I am trew as steyll (TP XIII, 226; q. Whiting S709)
* 1 Pastor; It is true as steyll That prophetys haue spoken (TP XIII, 699-700; q. Whiting S709)

S21 As stiff as any stone
* Mary; My harte is styff as stone (TP XXIII, 399; q. Whiting S771. 1425)

S21a As still as any stone
* Noah; I shall make the still as stone beynnar of blunder (TP III, 406; q. Whiting S772. c1200)
* 3 Filius; As still as a stone oure ship is stold (TP III, 525; q. Whiting S772)
* Imperator; FFor thy be styll as ston (TP IX. 6)
(YP S10b)

S21b Stone-still
* Imperator; Ston styll ye wold syt downe (TP IX. 12; q. Whiting S772a. a1200)
* 3 Pastor; If I stonde stone styll (TP XIII. 232; q. Whiting S772a)
* Hak; Ye lyg stone styll (TP XIII. 280; q. Whiting S772a)
(YP S10c)

S21c As true as any stone
* Noah; Thou art trew to trist as ston in the wall (TP III.515; q. Whiting S774. a1300; cf. Heywood 1894)
* Pilate; Truly as stone (TP XXII, 99; q. Whiting S776. c1340)
* Jesus; It shalbe true as any stone (TP XXIX. 106; q. Whiting S774)

S21d To stand like a stone
* Pilate; I commaunde you, careless vnkynde, to stand as styll as any stone (TP XX, 581; q. Whiting S772). Stand as styll as stone in wall (TP XXIII. 2)
* Luke; He stud as still, that bright, As stone in wall (TP XXVII, 60-1; Whiting S772)
(YP S10d)

S22 As bright as the Sun
* Lucifer; I am a thousand fold brighter then is the son (TP I. 88-9; q. Whiting S881. a800)
* Mary; Thyn een as cristall clere that shoyn as son in sight (TP XXIII, 361)
* Moses; His face was like the son for bright (TP XXV, 82; q. Whiting S881)
* Jesus; Thai shall shyne as son bright and heuen have to thare mede (TP XXVIII, 347; q. Whiting S881)
S22a  To gape at the Sun
   3 Tortor; Gape agans the son (TP XXIII, 226)
      cf. 2 Pastor; Can ye bark at the mone? (TP XIII, 662; q. Whiting M654.
         1402; see M7a)

S23  To Sup wisdom
   # 2 Pastor; He has told vs full plane Wysdom to sup (TP XII, 177-8; cf. To
      sup sorrow, Whiting SS22. 1400)

T1  To Have at one's Tabard
   2 Mulier; Haue at they tabard (TP XVI, 357; cf. Touch one's tabard = pay
      him back, Whiting Tl. c1400; see C8)

T2  To be in one Tale
   Froward; Ye ar euer in one tayll (TP XXI, 377; OFO sb 3d. 1375)

T3  Thrift
   # Cain; Lenys he me, as com thrift apone the so? (TP II, 118). Who so will do
      after me ffull slope of thrift then shal he be (TP II, 413-4)
   # 1 Pastor; Yll thryft on thy pate (TP XIII, 150)
   # Herod; Mighty mahowne, as he well may, lette you neuer thryfete (TP XIV, 467-8)
   # 1 Tortor; Fful shorte shalbe his thryfte (TP XXIII, 231)
   # 2 Tortor; Bot fare well, thryfte! (TP XXIV, 391)

T4  As sharp as a Thistle
   # 2 Pastor; As sharp as thystyl (TP XIII, 101; q. Whiting T210, only this
      example)

T5  Thrive-Strife
   Garcia; Begyn he with you for to stryfe, certis, then he neuer thryfe (TP
      II, 17-8)
   Deus; Sayf noe and his wife, ffor thay wold neuer stryfe With me ne me
      offend (TP III, 108-8)

T5a  Migh t one Thrive
   # Garcia; I fend, godis forbot, that euer thrife (TP II, 38)
   # Noah's Wife; Now, as euer myght I thryfe the wars I thee see (TP III, 190
      -1). Even as thou prayes for me, As euer myght I thryfe (TP III, 242-3),
      And I am bet so bio That I may not thryfe (TP III, 413-4)
   # 1 Pastor; It were grette wonder, And euer shuld we thryfe (TP XII, 26-7)
   # 3 pastor; That shall I do, as myght I thryfe (TP XXIII, 134)

T5b  Long before I Thrive
   # Garcia; Mon ye neuer thryfe (TP II, 18)
   # Cain; Long or I thrive (TP II, 205), How will thou do long or thou thrive?
      (TP II, 410)

T5c  It is hard to wive and Thrive
   # 1 Pastor; A man may not wyfe And also thryfe, And all in a yere (TP XII,
      97-9; Heywood 873)

T6  As sharp (rought) as a Thorn (briar)
   # 2 Pastor; As rugh as breere (TP XIII, 101)
   # Mary; To shontit the showres sharper then thorn (TP XXIX, 361; q. Whiting
      T221. c1350)

T7  To claw one's Toes
   Mak; Dos noght bot lakys and close his toose (TP XIII, 414; q. Whiting
      T356. a1400)
T8 From top to tall
# Satan: I know his transtes Fro top to tayll (TP XXV, 162; cf. Whiting T424, cl300; cf. D35)
(YP T3)

T9 I have Tow on my rok...See R4

T10 No man may lie Truth
John: The truth shuld no man layn (TP XXII, 282; cf. Truth can not lie. Whiting T500, cl400)

T11a Faith and Truth
1 Demon; Faith and truth, maffay has no fete to stande (TP XXX, 188; cf. Truth must stand. Whiting T506, al393)

T12 Set in a Turd
1 Pastor: Sett in a torde (TP XIII, 216; cf. Not give a turd, Whiting T524, cl250; Not set a stinking turd, Whiting T525, cl500)

T13 God turn all to good
1 Pastor: God turne all to good (TP XIII, 130 & 375; cf. N6)

W1 To stand like a Wall
# Moses: On ayther syde the see mon stande to we be gone, right as a wall (TP VIII, 390-1; q. Whiting W25, cl175)
(YP W1)

W2 In the Wanying
Cain: In the wenwayand wiȝ ye now at last (TP II, 226; q. Whiting W36, al352)
Noah’s Wife: Now walk in the Wenyand (TP XIII, 405; q. Whiting W36)
Malcus: Step furth, in the wenyannde (TP XX, 748; q. Whiting W36)
Pilate Whystill ye in the wenynade (TP XXIV, 339; q. Whiting W36)
Caiphans: Weynad furth in the Wenyande (TP XXVI, 144; q. Whiting W36)
(YP W3)

W3 Wedding (warning against marriage)
Joseph: I irke full sore with my lyfe. That euer I wed so yong a wyfe, That bargan may I ban. To me it was a carefull dede, I myght well wyte that yowthede wold haue lykynge of man (TP X, 161-6). It is ill coupled of youth and elde (TP X, 170; q. Whiting Y33, cl390; Heywood 340). I was vnlykely to hir so yong. Thay sayde ther helpyd none excusyng, And wed vs thus togeder (TP X, 266-8). Ffor yong women wiȝ nedys play them with yong men, if old forsake them. Thus it is sene alwayes (TP X, 302-4). Nowsehoid and husbandry ful sore I may it ban. That bargan dere I by. Yong men, bewar, red I: wedynge makys me all wan (TP XV, 146-50; see Heywood 249-50)
2 Pastor: These men that ar wed have not all thare wiȝl, when ar full hard sted thay sysh full styll (TP XIII, 73-4; cf. Wedding and hanging are destiny, Whiting W164, 1546; Heywood 175-6; Wedding is the hardest band that any man may take on hand. Whiting W166, cl375). Wo is hym that is bun. Ffor he must abyde (TP XIII, 80-1). Yong men of woyng for god that you bough, Be well war of wedynge and thynk in youre thoghte. “had I wost” is a thynge it scrutys of noght (TP XIII, 91-3; First woyng for woyng, banna for bannynge. Heywood 2205: All fyry haste to wed, it soone rebateth. Heywood 88). Mekyll styll mowyn-yng has wedynge home broght. And greفس (TP XIII, 84-5)
Peter: I dar lay my heedede to wed. Or that we go vntill oure bed That we shall here anothere (TP XXVIII, 56-8)
(see YP W4)
W4 To have Ween one kens more than he knows
1 Magister: He wenys he kens more then he knowys (TP XVIII, 64; q. Whiting W176. a1425)

W5 Ill spun Weft comes out evil
Carciol: Ill spen weft ay comes foule out (TP II, 435; q. Whiting W571. c1250)
2 Pastor: Ill spen weft, lwys, ay commys foull owte (TP XIII, 587; q. Whiting W571)

W6 Beware of the West Wind
Tuttiullus: Bewar of the West wynde youre smok lest it wafe (TP XXX, 330-1)

W7 As great as a Whale
2 Pastor: She is as great as whall (TP XII, 105; q. Whiting W201, only this example)

W8 Whetstone
1 Tortor: He lyes for the quetstone, l gyf hym the pryce (TP XXI, 80; q. Whiting W216. 1418)

W9 To wet one's Whistle
2 Pastor: Had She oones Wett Nyr Whystyll She couth Syng full clere Nyr pater noster (TP XIII, 103-4; q. Whiting W222. c1390)

W10 Widow's coyle (cabbage soup)
Noah's Wife; Lord, I were at ese and hertely full hoyle, Might I onys have a meassce of wedows coyll (TP III, 388-9)

W11 Chastise Wife's tongue
Noah: Yee men that has wyfis whyls they ar yong, If ye luf youre lifis chastisce thare tong (TP III, 397-8; If a woman does not chastise herself, with pain may any other chastise her. Whiting W489. c1505; cf. Whiting W 513 & Heywood 1779-80. 2266-7)

W12 To have Wit to make a ship drowned
3 Pastor: These wold by thare wytt make a shyp be drownde (TP XII, 145; q. Whiting W146, only this example)

W12a To have one's wit go out...
3 Pastor: So gase youre wytys owte evyn as it com in (TP XII, 173; q. Whiting W407, only this example)
2 Tortor: I will wepe and I will skyp As I were now out of my wytt (TP XXIV. 117-8; Let not harmfull haste so far out ren your wyt, Heywood 114)

W12b Wit raves
# Herod: With sych wylys and crokys My wytt away rafys (TP XVI, 233-4). Ensamplly to take. In thare wyttys that raufs sych mastre to make (TP XVI, 497-8)

W12c Wit in waght (a bad way)
Consultus: Were not my wyse wysdom youre wyttys were in waght (TP XXIV, 218; Who seeth nought herein, his wit is in the wane, Heywood 2156)
(Y P W7)

W13 Wait on one's Wings
Nuncius: Ther watys on his wynys that bold host wyll blaw (TP XVI, 39; cf. To be under another's wings. Tilley W495. 1540; Heywood 1247)
W14 Wolf-skin
3 Pastor: I mought he was lap in a wolfe skyn (TP XIII, 368; cf. None ought to wear the wolf's skin but he that will be like him, Whiting W446. 1494)

W15 Wolf-head
Caiphas: Now wols-hede and out-horne on the be tane (TP XXI,139; see C14)

W16a Woman's advice
Mak's Wife: A woman avyse helphys at the last (TP XIII, 342; q. Whiting W536. c1330)

W16b Household that wants a Woman
Noah's Wife: Ffull wofull is the householde. That wantys a woman (TP XIII, 420-1; q. Whiting, H620. only this example; No lack to lack a wife, Heywood 2750)

W16c Woman is ill-fettled
2 Demon: Thai ar euer in were if thai be tender, yell fetyl (TP XXX, 164-5; cf. In good fettled)

W16d In Woman is no law
Paul; Wherfor in woman is no laghe, ffor she is withouten aghe (TP XXVIII, 45-6; q. Whiting W493, only this example)

W16e A Woman like an apple rotten inwardly
Paul; Till an appyll she is lyke--withouten faill ther is none slyke--In horde ther it lyse. Bot if a man assay it witterly. It is full roten inwardly At the colke within (TP XXVIII, 38-43; q. Whiting W511. only this example)

W16f Woman can paint
Tutulius: When she is thus paynt, she makys it so quaynte. She lookys like a saynt. And waris then the deyle (TP XXX, 205-8; see S6 & W27)

W16g Woman raises up a smoke
2 Demon: She that is most meke, When she semys full seke, she can rase vp a reke if she well nettyld (TP XXX, 166-9; see R1)

W16h Woman is as sharp as a spear
#2 Demon: They are as sharp as a spere if thai seme bot slender (TP XXX, 163)

W16i To be afraid & lightly solaced like Woman
Thomas: Ye ar as women rad for blood and lightly oft solaced (TP XXVIII, 232)

W16j Woman's witness
Thomas: A womans witness trowys better than that ye se (TP XXVIII, 241)

W16k Who trusts woman
Joseph: Who wold any woman trow? Certys, no man that can any goode (TP X, 174-5; q. Whiting W505. al1245)
Peter: Ther is no trust in womans saw. No trust faith to belefe: ffor with thare quayntyse and thare yyle. Can thay laghe and wepe som while. And yit nothyng theym grefe (TP XXVIII, 30-4; q. Whiting W505)
W17 Fair Words
3 Pastor: Fare wordys may ther be but luf is ther none (TP XIII, 569; q. Whiting W581, first entry)
1 Tortor: Fare wordys can thou paynt (TP XXI, 21)
cf. 3 Pastor; I trow the shrew can paynt (TP XIII, 210)

Y1 Yarn
Noah: Ther is garn on the rey11 (TP III, 298; q. Whiting Y5, only this example; see T9)
Collection II
Proverbs, proverbial expressions, similes and idiomatic phrases in the York Cycle

YP = York Play

A3 To look like an Ape
* Mulier: He lokis lurkand like an ape (YP XXIX, 105; q. Whiting A145. a1300)

B1 To buy a Bargain
Noah’s Wife: This bargan sall be bought (YP IX, 126; q. Whiting B42. a1352)
When we were to syke bargane broght (YP IX, 130)
Joseph: The bargayne sall ye aby (XIII, 111)
Juda: That bargayne with bale schall he by (YP XXVI, 140)
(TP B1)

B1a To curse a Bargain
* Herod: This bargayne schall thai banne (YP XIX, 279)
  * Jude: That bargayne schall sche banne (YP XXIV, 11)
  * Demon: This bargayne may l banne (YP XXX, 158)

B1b To brew (make) a Bargain
* Adam: And made this bad bargayne (YP V, 119)
  * Joseph: Itt was to me a bad barganne (YP XIII, 23), The bargayne I made thare (YP XII, 35)
  * Juda: That I schulde alle this bargayne brewe (YP XXVII, 107)

B2 Not to set a Bean
Herod: A borowed bene sette l mought be hym (YP XXXI, 102)
(TP B2)

B3 To bark (bay) at one’s Beard
Jude: Thus at my berde and ye berk (YP XXVI, 167)
Caiphas: At his berde sall we baye (YP XXXIII, 87; q. Whiting B113; only this example)

B4 Beast in a band
Caiphas: Itt is no burde to bete bestis that are bune (YP XXIX, 243)
  3 Miles: This werke is wele nowe I warrand. For he is bowne as beeste in bande (YP XXXIV, 340-l; q. Whiting B146. c1330)

B4a To be trussed like a Beast
* 1 Miles: He schall be feste as fee (YP XXXIV, 336)

B5 To bear the Bell
Caiphas: Sen ye bere of bawe the bell (YP XXVI, 195; q. Whiting B230. c1303)
(TP B4)

B6 As light as a Bird on a bough
Claudus (lame man): I am als light as birde on bowe (YP XXV, 288; q. Whiting B294. first entry)

B7 Black and Blue
Lucifer: My brightnes es blakkesthe and blo nowe (YP I, 101)
(cf. TP B6)
B8 As bright as a Blossom on brier
  # Pilate: If all my blee be as bright as blossome on breere (YP XXVI, 20; q. Whiting B376. c1350)

B9 Not to give a Bone
  2 Miles; He gettis no bettr bone (YP XXXIV, 8; see Whiting B445. c1400)

B10 By Books and bells
  # Joseph: Thou dotist dame, by bukes and belles (YP XIII, 179; q. Whiting B456. c1300)

B11 To be Bought and sold
  Pilate: Thus schall the sothe be bought and solde (YP XXXVIII, 469; q. Whiting B637. al100)

B12 Bounteth (gift) asks reward
  2 Pastor: For I haue herde declared Of connynge clerkis and clerke, That bountith askis rewarde (YP XV, 116-8; q. Whiting B474. only this example)

B13 To learn to Bend and Bow
  Pilate: It is beste for oure bote in bayle for to bowne (YP XXVI, 270; cf. To be bent like a bow. Whiting B479)
  Caiaphas: But lerne yone boy bettir to bende and bowe (YP XXIX, 349)

B14 Not to eat any more Bread
  Miles: I schall lenger so ther liffe That tho brothelles schall neuere bite brede (YP XXXVI, 289-90; q. Whiting B520. c1400)
  (TP B11a)

B15 To burst one's Breast
  # Pilate: Bold men that in batayll makis brestis to breste (YP XXVI, 4)

B16 To bow the Brede(breadth) of a hair
  Caiaphas: If yon baners bowe the brede of an hare (YP XXXII, 242; q. Whiting B526. a1300)

B17 To Brew a bale
  # Jude: Tille hym ther brought one a boyste my bale for to brewe (YP XXVI, 131)
  # Pilate: Ye go schall to gete hym Unto his body breuw ye no bale (YP XXVI, 289)
  # Annas: Of yone losell his bale schall he brewe (YP XXVIII, 204)
  # Malcus: Nowe yone boy with his boste has brewed mekili bale (YP XXIX, 132)
  # 2 Duke: That bodus oothir bourdnyng or bales to brewe (YP XXIX, 80)
  # Caiaphas: The tribute to take or to trace, Forbadde he, oure bale for to brewe (XXVI, 55-6)

B18 To look like an Brock
  Mulier: He lokis like a brokke Were he in a bande for to bayte (YP XXIX, 115-6; q. Whiting B558. only this example)

C1 It is not fair to fight with a foolish Child
  Herod: It is not faire to feght with a fonned foode (YP XXXI, 294)

C2 As clear as any Crystal
  # Pilate: And my colour as cristall is cleere (YP XXXII, 25; q. Whiting C589. c1350)
  (TP C15)
C2a A s c l e a n a s a n y C r y s t a l
   * Angel: His aungell cleere as cristall cleene (YP VII, 5; q. Whiting C588.
c1350)
   (cf. TP C15)

C3 T o k i s s t h e C u p
   1 Miles: We counsaile you this cuppe sauerly for to kissse (YP XXIX, 80; q.
   Whiting C629; a1400)

C4 S h o r t C u t s h a l l w i n
   4 Miles: The shorte cutte schall wynne (YP XXXV, 295)

D1 T h a t D a n c e i s d o n e
Pharaoh: That daunce is done (YP XI, 225; q. Whiting D9, firtst entry)
Nuncio: Nay lorde, that daunce is done (YP XIX, 96; q. Whiting D9)
   (TP D1)

D2 A s b r i g h t a s a D a y
* Anna Prophet: Welcome bright starne that shyneth bright as day (YP XVII,
   326; q. Whiting D33; a1300)
* Jesus: That berde is brighter than the daye (YP XLVI, 4; q. Whiting D33)

D3 T h e D e v i l a n d h i s d a m e
   Herod: What the devyll and his dame schall ye now doo? (YP XXXI, 245; q.
   Whiting D181; c1350; Heywood 2253-4)

D4 I n t h e D e v i l ' s d i s p i t e (m a l i c e)
   # Herod: Pees dastard, in the deuiles dispite (YP XVI, 130)
   # 1 Consultus: Go, in the deuiles dispite (YP XIX, 133)

D5 D e v i l d r a w y o u
   # Pilate: The devyll motte you drawe (YP XXX, 433)
   (TP D6)

D6 D e v i l d r o w n y o u
   # Pharaoh: Al, Dagg! the devyll the drowne (YP XI, 240), Devill, 1 drowne
   (YP XI, 403)
   # Herod: The deuiles of helle you droune (YP XIX, 269), The devyll myght hym
   droune (YP XXXI, 308)
   (TP D7)

D7 T o g o t h e D e v i l o f h e l l
   # Pharao: Fy on tham, to the devell of helle (YP XI, 67)
   (TP D10)

D8 D e v i l h a n g o n e u p
   # 4 Miles: The deviill hym hang! (YP XXXV, 188)
   (TP D12)

D9 I n t h e d e v i l ' s n a m e
   # Herod: Whedir, in the deuyls name? (YP XVI, 189), Schall I rise nowe, in
   the deuylis name (YP XXXI, 71)
   # 1 Miles: Go, hye you hens awaye, in the deuylis name, doune the hill (YP
   XXXIV, 208-9)
   (TP D17)

D10 D e v i l s p e e d y o u
   # Cain: The devyll the speyde (YP VII, 77). The devyll myght speyd both hym
   and the (YP VII, 96), Ya, devell (YP VII, 60)
   # Herod: A, dogges, the deuell you spede (YP XIX, 106)
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D11 Devil in your throat
# Herod: Wendis fourth, the deuyll in thi throte (YP XXXI, 398)
(c.f. TP D3)

D12 In the Devil's way
# Pharaoh: Go saie we graunte tham leue to gange In the devill way (YP XI, 353-4; q. Whiting D218. c1200)
# Herod: In the deuyll way, dogges. fy (YP XVI, 177; q. Whiting D218)
# Pilate: Walke oute at the dore in the deuill way (YP XXXII, 190; q. Whiting D218)
Satan: Honnoure? In the deuill way (XXXVII, 133)
(TP D25)

D13 To dance in the Devil's way
Cain: Daunce in the devil way (YP VII, 52; q. Whiting D218. c1200)
Caiphas: Daunce forth in the deuyll way (YP XXIX, 395; q. Whiting D218)
Herod: Daunce on, in the devill way (YP XXXI, 423; q. Whiting D218)

D14 If the Devil swore
# Herod: This gadlyng schall agayne If that the deuyll had sworne (YP XIX, 63-4)
(TP D26)

D15 What (who, where) the Devil (varied)
# Pharaoh: Why, devill, what gawdes haue they begonne? (YP XI, 37)
# 1 Miles: What a deuyll is this to saye (YP XXXIV, 206)
# Satan: What deuill haste thou done ay syne (YP XXXVII, 223)
# 3 Miles: What devuill is this, what aylis you twoo (YP XXXVIII, 294)

D16 Devil ails one
# 2 Filius: What a deuyll aylsh hym? (YP XXXI, 298)
# Pharaoh: What deuyll ayles yow so to crye? (YP XI, 291)
(TP D29)

D17 Devil (varied)
# Pharaoh: No! Devilll! (YP XI, 338)
# 1 Miles: What, deuyll, whome schulde we drede? (YP XXXIV, 285)
# 4 Miles: Wh. harrowe! Deviull, whare is he away? (YP XXXVIII, 298)
# Annas: Be the deuyllis nese (YP XXXIII, 196)
(TP D30)

D18 To Die only once
1 Miles: We dye but onys (YP XXXVIII, 338; q. Whiting D242. a1400)

D19 To be dumb like a Door
# 1 Miles: Bot domme as a dore gon he dwell (YP XXXIII, 64; q. Whiting 0347. a1370)
F1 Fair and soft men go far
    Herod: Fare softly, for so will it seeme (YP XXXI, 421)
    (TP F2)

F2 One bears the Flower
    Jesus: Off all women thou heris the floure (YP XLVI, 130; q. Whiting F316.
    cl400)

F3 To dress like a Fool (-king)
    1 Duke: He schalle be rayed like a roye (YP XXXI, 359)
    1 Miles: To clothe hym and to croune with thorne, As falles for a fole kyng
    (YP XXXIV, 27-8; cf. To play the Fool, Heywood 2595)

G1 To glide like a Giant
    # Simeon: This babb as a gyant full graythly shall glyde (YP XVII, 449)

G2 To glide like the Gleam
    # 2 Rex: Als the gleme in the glasse gladly thou glade (YP XVI, 328; q.
    Whiting G130, first entry)

G2a To glitter like the Gleam
    # Pilate: And myne cyne thei glittir like the gleme in the glasse (YP XXXII.
    21; q. Whiting G132, only this example)

G3 As gay as any Gold
    # Herod: Seuene and sixti siths Than glorius gultes that gayer is than golde
    in price (YP XVI, 18-20; q. Whiting G287. a1425)

G4 Grief may not amend
    Eve: Be stille Adam, and nemen it na mare, it may not mende (YP VI, 155-6; see
    Whiting D337)

H1 To have other Hafts in hands
    1 Magister: Sone, hense away I wolde thou wente, For othis hafts in hande
    haue we (YP XX. 75-6; q. Whiting H11, only this example)

H2 Out of Harre (-joint)
    1 Miles: Harke how this harlott he heldes oute of harre (YP XXX. 380; q.
    Whiting H144. cl300)
    Caiphas: Ye saile here how this harlott heldes oute of herre (YP XXXIII. 135; q.
    Whiting H144)

H3 He who enters the Hell shall never comes back
    Satan: Salamon saide in his sawes That whoso enteres helle withynne Shall
    never come oute (XXXVII, 281-3)

H4 Hen-hearted
    Anna: A, henne-harte, ill happe mot you hente (YP XXXIII, 197; q. Whiting
    H349, first entry)

I1 Illa hail
    Pharaoh: Hopp illa hayle (YP XI, 245)
    Malcus: What, illa hayle. I hope that I be hole (YP XXVIII, 291)
    3 Miles: Come helpe to haale, with illa haile (XXXV, 116)
    (TP II)

J1 To jangle like a Jay
    1 Miles: He jangelis like a jay (YP XXXV. 265; q. Whiting J21. cl353)
K1 As keen as any Knife
   * Noah: My cares aren keene as knyffe (YP IX, 7; q. Whiting K36. a1425)
   * 3 Filius: Oure cares are kene as knyffe (YP IX, 223)

K2 To knit a knot
   Judas: I sittie For therty pens in a knotte knytte (YP XXVI, 151-2)
   Pilate: But Judas, a knott for to knytt (YP XXVI, 233; q. Whiting K97.c1405)
   (TP K1)

L1 To have one's Labor in vain
   Demon: This trauayle is in vayne (YP XXII, 125; q. Whiting L11. a1338)

L2 To look like a Lad
   * 2 Filius: He lurkis, loo, and lokis like a ladde (YP XXXI, 301)
   Satan: Thou hast lued ay like a ladde (XXXVII, 243)

L3 To look like a Lamb
   * Caiaphas: He lokis like a lambe (YP XXX, 274; q. Whiting L45. c1378;
   Heywood 2434)

L4 As heavy as any Lead
   Joseph: My banes er heuy als lede (YP XII, 15; q. Whiting L123. a750)
   Methynke myne eyne Heeye as leede (YP XVIII, 20-1; q. Whiting L123)
   Mary: Myne harte is heuy as any lede (YP XX, 207). My harte is heuy as
   leede (XXXVI, 262)
   Peter: My lymmys are heuy as any leede (YP XXVII, 21)
   (TP L3)

L5 As light as a Leaf
   * Simeon: Nowe am I light as leyf on tree (YP XVII, 346; q. Whiting L140.
   a1400)
   (TP L4)

L6 As light as any Levin
   * Jesus: Myne aungellis louely of late, lighter than the levene (YP XLIV,
   175; q. Whiting L213. c1375)

L7 Life is sweet
   Issac: Lyff is full swete (YP X, 279; q. Whiting L246. c1380)

L8 To be like Lily
   * Doctor: This lady is to the lilly lyke (YP XII, 97; q. Whiting L281. a1350)
   * 1 Rex: A mayden of Israuell, sais he. Shall bere one like to the lilly floure
   (YP XVI, 227-8)

L9 As even as a Line
   * 1 Miles: I sall holde this as even as a lyne (YP XXXIII, 244; q. Whiting
   L298. a1338)

L10 To command like a Lord
   * 3 Miles: Thou comandis lightly as a lorde (XXXV, 115)

M1 As sweet as Mead
   Mary: Thi loue is swetter thanne the mede (YP XXXIX, 89; q. Whiting M431.
   c1350)
   (TP M2)

M2 In the Mire
   Satan: Thou motes his men into the myre (YP XXXVII, 256)
   (TP M5)
M3 Mourning may mend
Noah: Than me we witte full right When oure mornyng saill mende (YP IX, 209-210)
John: Youre mornyng it may not amende (XXXVI, 175)
Mary Cleopa: This mornyng helpe hir ne maye (XXXVI, 273)
( TP M8 )

M4 There is no use in Mutigg (disputing)
1 Filius: All youre mutying amendis not a myte (YP XXXI, 335; q. Whiting M597. a1375)

M5 To make a Mow (grimace) on the moon
3 Miles: And make mowes on the mone (YP XXXV, 286; q. Whiting M767. c1320)
Annas: To move on the moone has he mente (YP XXXVI, 79; q. Whiting M767)

O1 The Old decay and the new prosper
4 Citizen: The olde schall waste, the new schall gang (YP XX, 146)

O2 To look like an Owl
# Muller: Or ells like an nowele in a stok. Full preualy his pray for to wayte (YP XXIX, 117-8; q. Whiting 075. c1400)

P1 To patter like a Pie
2 Miles: Methynke he patris like a py (YP XXXV, 266; q. Whiting P180, only this example)

R1 To raise a Reek
Anna: For thurgh his rumour in this reme hath raysede mekill reke (YP XXVI, 34; q. Whiting R76, first entry)
( TP R1 )

R2 As light as any Roe
# Pilate: Now than am light as a roo (YP XXX, 263; q. Whiting R168. c1390)

S1 If I Say it myself
Pilate’s Wife: Ther is no lorde in this londe as I lere. In faith, that hath a frendy lar feere Than yhe my lorde, myselfe tho I saye itt (YP XXX, 43-5; q. Whiting S74, only this example)

S2 To sow Seed
Caiaphas: And saie vnto oure souereynes, or seede more be swawn (YP XXVI, 189; see Whiting S134. 1451)

S3 To Sing “alas”
Deus: His sange ful sone saill be “alas” (YP XI, 128; q. Whiting S466. c1300)
Maria: Of sorowes seere schal be my sang (YP XX, 43)
3 Miles: He may synaxe or he slepe of sorowe and angir (XXXIII, 422)
( TP S7 )

S4 As swift as any Snail
# 1 Miles: Nowe certis that schall I doo-Full snelly as a snayle (YP XXXV, 117-8; q. Whiting S417: Heywood Jhan Bl(v) 41)

S5 As white as any Snow
# Pilate: His clothynge is as white as snowe (YP XXIII, 97; q. Whiting S437. a900)
# Moses: Whyte as snowe was his body (YP XXXVII, 89; q. Whiting S437)
( TP S12 )
S6 All Sooth (truth) is not to be said
   Abraham: But alle the sooth is nght to sayne (YP X, 106; q. Whiting S485.
c1025)

S7 To Spurn rather than speed
   Mary: I sporne ther I was wonte to spede (YP XXXIX, 15; q. Whiting S644.
c1420)

S8 As steadfast as any Steel
   Anna: Therfore take vs of oure knyghtis that is stedfast as stele (YP
   XXVIII, 166; q. Whiting S702. c1390)
   (TP S20b)

S9 As steadfast as a Stock
   Thomas: I thanke the as stedfast stokke for to stande (XLV, 171)

S10 As blind as any Stone
   # Cecus: I was are blynde as any stone (YP XXV, 356; q. Whiting S757. c1300)

S10a As naked as a Stone
   #1 Miles: But naked as a stone be stedde (YP XXXIV, 312; q. Whiting 766.
c1440)

S10b As still as any Stone
   # Joseph: But halde the stille als stane (YP XIII, 193; q. Whiting S772.c1200)
   # Herod: And stille as stone ye stande (YP XIX, 4; q. Whiting S772)
   # Pilate: Bidde them...stande still as a stone (YP XXX, 374; q. Whiting S772)
   #2 Filius: Why standis thou as stille as a stone here? (YP XXXI, 324. q.
   Whiting S772)
   (TP S21a)

S10c Stone-still
   #3 Rex: And stedde yone sterne to stande stone stille (YP XVI, 84; q. Whiting
   S772a. a1200)
   # Juda: And stedde hym stone stille (YP XXVIII, 175; q. Whiting S772a)
   #1 Dux: Stalkis furthe be yone stretis or stande stone still (YP XXXI, 62;
   q. Whiting S772a). Hym had leuerhe haue stande stone still ther he stode
   (YP XXXI, 252; q. Whiting S772a)
   # Pilate: Ye stirre with no striffe but stande stone stille (YP XXXII,2;
   q. Whiting S772a)
   #1 Miles: Stirre noght ones in this stede but stonde stille (YP XXXIV, 2;
   q. Whiting S772a)
   (TP S21b)

S10d To stand like a Stone
   #4 Miles: He made vs stande as any stones (YP XXXV, 217; q. Whiting S786.
a1000)
   (TP S21d)

S10f One might as well stir a stock like a Stone
   # Herod: A man myght as wele stere a stokke as a stone (YP XXXI, 278; q.
   Whiting S745, only this example)

S11 Not stine (step) over two Straw
   Joseph: And may noght wele trynce over two strase? (YP XIII, 13; q. Whiting
   S814. first entry; Heywood 1069)

S12 To shine like the Sun
   # Peter: His face schynes as the sonne (YP XXIII, 98)
S13 Sword of sorrow
John; The swerde of sorowe schulde renne Thurghoute the herte (XXXIV, 148-9)
Mary; A swerde of sorowe me smyte (XXXVI, 159)

S13a He who takes the Sword shall perish by the sword
Malcus; For he that strikis with a swerd with a swerde schall be smitten (YP XXIX, 146; q. Whiting S978)

T1 To hang like a Thief
Mary; Alas, My lorde...Hyngis as a theffe (YP XXXVI, 139-42; q. Whiting T82. a1450)

T2 Might one Thrive
Mary; All is lost...Hyngis as a theffe (YP XXXIII, 419)
Mary; So motte I thrive (YP XXXV, 246)
Mary; So motte I thrive (YP XL. 143)
(YP T5a)

T3 From Top to tail
Mary; Go to the kyng and tell hym fro toppe vnto tayle (YP XXXI, 196; Whiting T420. c1400)
Satan; I knowe his trantis fro toppe to taile (YP XXXVII, 158; q. Whiting T420)
(YP T8)

T3a Top and tail
Mary; Faste on a corde And tugge hym to, by toppe and taile (YP XXXV, 113-4; q. Whiting T424. c1300)

T4 As large as Tuns
Perigrinus; Thanne was his tombe tome as a tonne (YP XL. 127; q. Whiting T518. c1421)

T5 As well talk to a toom (empty) Tun
Caiaphas; We myght als wele talke tilde a tome tonne (YP XXIX, 247; q. Whiting T519. only this example)

W1 To stand like a Wall
Mary; On anythir syde the see sall stande. Tille we be wente, right as a wall (YP XI. 379-80; q. Whiting W25. c1175)
(YP W1)

W2 As weak as a Wand
Mary; I waxe as wayke as any wande (YP XVIII, 17; q. Whiting W32. a1400)

W3 In the Waning
Cain; In wilde waneand? (YP VII, 45; q. Whiting W36. a1352)
Herod; Welde tham in woo to wonne. In the wanyand (YP XVI, 37; q. Whiting W36)
Pilate; Nowe walkis on in the wanyand (YP XXXII. 389; q. Whiting W36.), Furth in the wyde wanyand be walkand (YP XXXIII. 485; q. Whiting W36)
(YP W2)

W4 Wedding
Joseph; Thou art yonge and I am alde, Slike werkys yf I do walde. Thase games fra me are gane (YP XIII. 194-6)
(YP W4)
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W5 To Ween one kens more than he knowes
Magister: He wenes he kens more than we knewes (YP XX, 90; q. Whiting W176. a1425)

W6 To waste as Wind (As waste as Wind)
Doctor: Thir wise wordis ware nought wroght in waste, To waffe and wende
away als wynde (YP XII, 53-4; q. Whiting W341. c1390)
Mary: I trowe oure wittis be waste as wynde (YP XX, 16; q. Whiting W297. c1375)
Peter: Woman, thy wordis and thy wynde thou not waste (YP XXIX, 119)

W6a Words are but Wind
1 Miles: For wordis are as the wynde (YP XXX, 236; q. Whiting W643. c1000)

W7 Wit is in danger
Satan: For woo my witte es in a were (YP V, 1)
(TP W12c)

W7a Wit fails one
2 Filius: Or ellis his witte faylis hym (YP XXXI, 302)

W7b Wit is wasted
Mary Magdalene: Mi witte is waste nowe in wede (XXXIX, 9)

W8 Both witty and wise
Pilate: Yhe schulde be bothe witty and wise (YP XXX, 456)
Caiphas: Als witte and wisdome youre will schal be wroght (YP XXX, 522)

W9 Women can excuse them well
Joseph: Excuse them wele there women can (YP XIII, 162; q. Whiting W533, only this example)

W9a Women are ill-tempered
Peter: For women are crabbed (YP XXIX, 128)

W9b Woman's wit is light
Adam: What womans witte was light! (YP VI, 133)

W9c Woman is witless
Adam: Bot sethyn that woman witteles ware (YP VI, 136)

W9d Who trust Woman
Adam: Nowe God late never man aftir me Triste woman tale (YP VI, 149-50)
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NOTES: First number = number of items
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Third number in parentheses = number of phrases quoted in Whiting
Table II

Proverbs, proverbial phrases, similes, and idiomatic phrases in the York Cycle

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Notes:
First number = number of items
Second number in parentheses = real number of phrases
Third number in parentheses = number of phrases quoted in Whiting
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