TOWARDS A NEW EDITION OF THE TAXATIO ECCLESIASTICA ANGLIAE ET WALLIAE AUCTORITATE P. NICHOLAI IV CIRCA A.D. 1291

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Taken as a whole the various groundbreaking and monumental works published by parliamentary order or specifically under the aegis of the Record Commission, from the late eighteenth century up to the middle of the nineteenth century,1 have had a chequered history. Some, like the re-issued Rymer's *Foedera*, took on a large and complex form which will probably never be followed in future editorial projects. Others have already been largely superseded by later long-term endeavours, like the *Calendarium Inquisitionum* and, indeed, *Domesday Book*. Yet others offer scope for supplementation without the pressing need for revised texts, like the *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum* and *The Antient Kalendars and Inventories*. There remain records of the utmost importance for medieval historians which urgently require to be re-studied from the manuscript sources, with, in many cases, completely new editing an undoubted desideratum.

In an age which has raised on a pedestal individual rather than collective scholarship, and at the same time established exacting standards of both exegesis and annotation, the contemplation of new editions of long and complicated texts has been akin to dreams of Shangri-la. Now, with the competitive availability of financial support from the major grant-giving bodies, it has become possible to establish teams of researchers to build on the past achievements of the government-employed editors. The *Rotuli Hundredorum* have been thoroughly re-assessed by a team working at the University of Sheffield: an edition of unpublished rolls is nearing completion, to be followed it is hoped by a composite index. A project aiming to re-edit the *Rotuli Parliamentorum* and based at the University of St

Andrews has just been launched. And research is well under way, under my supervision, to produce a fully revised text of the 'spiritualities' sections of the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctore P. Nicholai IV*, which was published in 1802 as the first volume in the Record Commission’s series of editions. In this case the project has been supported by both the Economic and Social Research Council and, more recently, the Leverhulme Trust. It was a grant from the ESRC for 1995–96 which made possible the research on which this article is based.

The *Taxatio* is a detailed assessment of all ecclesiastical income ordered by Pope Nicholas IV and carried out in 1291–92. The 'spiritualities' sections for all the dioceses of England and Wales list and value ecclesiastical benefices, that is churches and their vicarages, and prebends, with many references to dependent chapels, portions and pensions. The printed edition is a transcript of late medieval copies of the assessment, in two books comprising the Canterbury province and the York province, made for the king's Exchequer: P(ublic) R(ecord) O ffice, E 164/14 (Canterbury, late fifteenth-century) and /13 (York, late fourteenth-century), hereafter PA and PB. The transcripts were carefully executed, though many abbreviated words were misread or deceptively reproduced.

It is understandable that these books, as complete official royal texts, were chosen as the basis for the Record Commission edition. But the choice was unfortunate. First, the texts had themselves been compiled from rolls relating to individual dioceses, many of which were compiled shortly after the assessment. The editors knew that many of these rolls were extant and compared some of them with the later text, giving occasional variants in footnotes, marked R.O. (Rotulus Originalis). But these cannot be understood as variant readings since the rolls were the sole original sources of PA and PB. The ‘R.O.’ variants thus represent for the most part transcription errors in PA and PB. Where early rolls were extant it would have been wiser to use these as the primary text. Secondly, many of the rolls, and thus the Exchequer books, included alterations and accretions of the fourteenth century, as well as revised lists relating to the collections of taxes in 1294 and later. While these are of considerable historical importance — and because of them the edition will

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2 The work was undertaken by two ‘subcommissioners’, Thomas Astle and Revd S. Ayscough, assisted by John Carey: *Report from the commissioners . . . respecting the public records of the kingdom, 1800–1812* (1812), 17, 20, 22, 146.

always have value – they are major obstacles to an accurate recreation of the original assessment returns.

The editors collated the Exchequer texts in PA and PB with one other manuscript: B(ritish) L(ibrary) Cotton Tiberius C x, a ‘Manuscript of much greater Antiquity . . . which has unfortunately suffered some Damage from the Fire which happened to the Cottonian Library whilst lodged in the Dormitory at Westminster’. This was the fire of 1731, which in fact occurred when the Library was housed in property in Little Dean’s Yard, Westminster, from which the surviving volumes were immediately moved to a new building designed for the dormitory of Westminster school. BL Cotton Tib. C x (hereafter BC) is certainly an important early text of the assessment, in general more reliable than PA and PB, but the work of collation was done erratically. This can have had little to do with the damage to the manuscript since it is mostly perfectly legible. In addition, early rolls in the British Library concerning the Salisbury diocese, BL Harl. Roll K38 and K39, were linked with the original rolls of the Exchequer and variants from them were noted as ‘R.O.’ readings.

It is clear that the printed edition fails to provide a clear and accurate edition of the original assessment, or, to put the matter more succinctly, of the original assessments in each diocese as set down between late 1291 and 1292, or – and this was the case in some dioceses – as corrected in the one or two years immediately following the first assessment in 1291–92. What is now being undertaken is just such an edition of the ‘spiritualities’ sections of the assessment, based on a new study of the manuscripts. This enormous task of editing could scarcely have been envisaged without recourse to the achievements of W.E. Lunt. His outstandingly painstaking research marked a major step forward in our understanding of the ecclesiastical assessments of the thirteenth century. Among many publications two books stand out as monuments to his scholarship: The valuation of Norwich (Oxford, 1926) and Financial relations of the papacy with England to 1327 (Cambridge, Massachussetts, 1939). His provisional list – in Appendix VII of the latter – of the many manuscript copies of the 1291–92 taxatio has been the starting point for the current project. This list, to which items are

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4 Taxatio, preamble p. c.
5 Catalogue of the manuscripts in the Cottonian Library (1802), p. xiii.
6 Taxatio, 177. Also, variant readings were given for some temporalities of the London diocese from BL Harl. Roll H31: Taxatio, 24, 29; and the editors knew of another roll, BL Harl. Roll N33, for the dioceses of Chichester and Winchester (Taxatio, 139), but they made only one brief reference to it.
naturally being added, was a major achievement in itself, although one deceptive aspect of it was the attempt to classify the rolls in the PRO under the headings 'original' and 'non-original'.

The form which the new edition will finally take will necessarily be determined, at least in part, by the research procedures that have been adopted. It is important, therefore, that these procedures are understood. Three primary factors lay behind crucial procedural decisions taken some twelve years ago. First, there was the very large number of manuscripts that would ultimately have to be consulted. These are, using Lunt's categories: (i) eleven codices, excluding the Exchequer books transcribed for the printed edition, all of which contain full, or almost full, versions of the assessment of spiritualities for England and Wales; (ii) around eighty rolls in the PRO relating to individual dioceses; (iii) a similar number of other diocesan versions in many archival collections, mostly unpublished; (iv) and an even greater number of smaller versions which relate to single ecclesiastical institutions, though many of these are the assessments of temporalities rather than spiritualities. Secondly, was the fact, clear from the beginning, that the assessments for each of the twenty-one dioceses of England and Wales would need to be studied separately. The findings of the assessors were recorded in significantly different ways from diocese to diocese, and the first rolls, copied and re-copied, provided the material for the first full compilations with little or no attempt at any stage to produce a higher degree of standardization in the entries than already existed. And thirdly, there was an a priori assumption, fully justified by later work, that even if each diocese were studied separately it was unlikely that a single source could be identified which could be confidently regarded as the first or the most authoritative text on which to base a new edition and with which other early copies should be collated. It followed from all this that it was impracticable, and probably futile, to undertake, at any rate as a first procedure, a thorough study of all the manuscripts in order to attempt to establish the primary text or texts. What, then, was the first procedure?

It was recognized at the outset that the assessment returns provided an outstanding opportunity for electronic conversion. A database would open up many possibilities of searching and re-tabulating the evidence as contained in the assessment, as well as rectifying immediately obvious weaknesses in the printed edition like

7 See Denton, 'The valuation of the ecclesiastical benefices', 242 n. 59.
8 That is, two more than listed by Lunt: for the codices in Stonyhurst College and Winchester College see below, 74.
inaccurate transcriptions and the lack of identification of place names. But, also, a database which included among its tables the full Latin text would provide the facility of downloading and printing out any section of the assessment, with any chosen details, so that the checking of manuscripts with the printed version could be effected with greater efficiency and speed. Underlying the decision to proceed with the creation of a database from the printed text was the belief that the material could be entered in a sufficiently flexible form to ensure that it could provide a first stage towards a new edition even if new texts with many different and/or additional readings were later chosen to add to or even supersede the text as printed. Thus, a team of voluntary researchers under my direction began in 1984 the long process of creating the *Taxatio* database.9 Using the printed edition as the basic text every aspect of the assessments of spiritualities has now been entered onto the various tables of the database, and some of those tables can be searched on the Internet: http://midas.ac.uk/taxatio.

Linked with this work was a second procedure. It was essential to understand fully the nature of the printed text derived from PA and PB. Because that text was itself derived from rolls many of which are extant, an examination of all these rolls was undertaken in order to identify those which were the sources for the text as printed and to list, and briefly describe the contents of, all the other rolls.10 For a final edition of the valuations of each diocese it will be essential to return to these rolls as now identified. Many of them are very early versions without the accretions relating to actual taxes collected from 1294 onwards; but even those accretions often provide information, notably about minor benefices, which will have to be taken into account in a final edition.

The third process, undertaken specifically with the aid of a grant from the Economic and Social Research Council during the academic session 1995–96, has been the detailed examination of the complete codices of the valuation. These manuscripts have been rarely consulted and it was essential that they be studied as a whole, so that links between them could be established and their relative importance for the creation of a new core text could be determined. A fundamental first question in respect of these codices was whether any one of them or any group of them could be regarded as providing a substantially better core text – to which variant readings could

10 See above n. 3.
be added from other sources – than the text of the printed edition. The assumption in 1995 was that these many manuscript copies would certainly provide important variant readings and additional readings, but that these would not be so extensive, or so clearly represent an earlier and more accurate version of the assessment, as to necessitate the replacement of the text as printed and as now on the database. As it turned out, this assumption was correct for some dioceses but not for others.

In addition to PA and PB of which the Taxatio was a transcript, eleven manuscripts have been studied, as itemized below, all of which contain complete, or near complete, versions of the spiritualities – in five cases only the spiritualities, and in two cases only of the Canterbury province – as assessed in 1291–92. They are listed here according to the sigla by which they are known in all references, here and on the database. The list includes preliminary findings especially about the dating of the manuscripts and the textual origins of their contents.

BA  BL, Additional MS 24060, 420 fos. A fair rubricated copy of the whole assessment, in a standardized format throughout and probably written in the mid-fourteenth century, certainly later than 1342. For the Canterbury province (fos 1–382) it is a direct, though not altogether slavish, copy of BC. But the source for the section on the York province (fos 386–420) is clearly derived from one or more text in the royal Exchequer, and the lists here follow the pattern of some of those in the printed edition.

BC  BL, Cotton Tiberius C x, 316 fos. This MS provided many variant readings in the printed Taxatio. It is a complete text for both provinces, with no clear distinction between the provinces (the diocese of York is included among the dioceses of the Canterbury province). It was compiled, probably from early diocesan rolls, by a number of hands. It must be dated c. 1300, certainly after March 1297 and before the 1318 reassessment of the northern dioceses which has been added in a later hand. It reveals itself, fo. 2v, in a hand later than the main text, as 'Registrum Domini Pape'.

CM  Canterbury Dean and Chapter, Register M, 322 fos. A fair rubricated copy of the spiritualities only, probably of an early fifteenth-century date. In essentials it is very similar to the printed text and derives from a version of the assessment in the Exchequer.

CU  Cambridge University Library, Mm.3.17, 170 fos. An early compilation

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11 It includes, on fo. 396, in the same hand as the main text a reference to a case determined in the Trinity term of 16 Edward III (as Taxatio, 304).

12 There are many indications of this, notably the copying from BC of scribal errors; but just occasionally the scribe of BA seems to have had access to extra information: at the end of the list for the rural deanery of Corringham (diocese of Lincoln, archdeaconry of Stow), on fo. 158v, an item ('Ecclesia de Wrot') was added subsequently but in the same hand.

13 See the reference to an Exchequer register on fo. 396.

14 See fos 87v–88r, as Taxatio, 177.

15 The earliest known owner of this codex (see the first leaf) is the early seventeenth-century Lord Chief Justice, Edward Coke (Dictionary of National Biography, 4, 685–700). In view of his close connections with Norwich it is possible that this manuscript is the copy of
TAXATIO ECCLESIASTICA

circa 1300 of the whole assessment, in thirteen groups of quires in different hands, probably copied from early diocesan rolls. The first two folios of the codex, including the spiritualities of Canterbury diocese, are missing. Textually it is closely related to LA and LF. A few references in a much later hand indicate that some details were checked with a 'registrum papae' (fos 4, 50v, 52v), but the details supplied from this register show that it cannot have been BC (or its copy BA).

LA Lincoln Dean and Chapter, A/1/11, 391 fos. This manuscript was clearly compiled specifically for the church at Lincoln, either for the bishop or for the dean and chapter, since it begins with the assessment of the cathedral dignities. It is an early, c. 1300, compilation of the whole assessment with the distinctive feature of dealing with the spiritualities of all dioceses first (fos 1–208). The spiritualities occupy twelve groups of quires, and the whole codex was probably a transcript, in the same hand or very similar hands, of early diocesan rolls. Textually it is closely related to CU and LF.

LF Lichfield Cathedral Library, MS 23, 210 fos. This codex has no doubt been in Lichfield ab initio, belonging initially to either the bishop or the dean and chapter. A few folios are missing, including the first two which contained the spiritualities of Canterbury diocese. It is an early, c. 1300, compilation of the whole assessment, occupying twenty-six numbered quires (normally of eight leaves) or part quires, with some added leaves. The whole codex was probably a transcript, in the same hand or very similar hands, of early diocesan rolls. At the end of many quires 'examinatur' is still visible despite some trimming of the manuscript, and occasionally, as fos 82v, 90v, 110v and 130v, 'examinatur Lond'. Textually it is closely related to CU and LA.

OE Oxford Bodleian Library, e Musaeo 21, 197 fos. A fair copy, probably of the early fifteenth century, of the spiritualities only, with a final leaf missing, thus curtailing the spiritualities of the Hereford diocese. It begins with the York province, indicating a possible northern provenance. It derives from the version of the assessment in the Exchequer.

OH Oxford Bodleian Library, Hatton 89, 239 fos. A fair but notably erratic copy, probably of the mid-fourteenth century, of the spiritualities of the Canterbury province. The first quire is lost, and also a final leaf, so that the Canterbury and Rochester dioceses and the beginning of the London diocese are missing, and the Landaff diocese is curtailed. Textually it is often, but not exclusively, related to BC, and shares with SC, directly or indirectly, a common source.

PC PRO, C270/16, file of 112 membranes. Transcripts of the Exchequer rolls, made for the Chancery, probably soon after the 1318 reassessment of the northern dioceses. The transcripts are of the spiritualities only. It was a Chancery reference copy: some membranes are lost, many are out of sequence and the bottom sections of many are illegible or torn.


16 The heading on fo. 47 indicates that the lists for the York diocese were based upon rolls from which some items were subtracted after the rendering of the accounts of the first three years of the sexennial tenth (collected between 1292 and 1294): '... a quibus quidem rotulis subtrahuntur omnia tam allocata in compotis primorum trium annorum decime quam illa pro quorum remedio scriptum est collectoribus decime post redditionem tertii compoti. Ita quod in eis solummodo bona nunc decimabilia inseruntur'. The accounts for the first three years had been rendered shortly after 1 January 1296 (W.E. Lunt, 'Collectors' accounts for the clerical tenth levied in England by order of Nicholas IV', English Historical Review, 31 (1916), 103, 108); and the changes in the lists must predate the re-commencement of collection, that is for the fourth year, in August 1300 (W.E. Lunt, Financial relations of the papacy with England to 1327 (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), 357).
SC Stonyhurst College Library, MS 22, 186 fos (1–7 parchment; 8–186 paper). An early fifteenth-century fair copy of the spiritualities and temporalities of the Canterbury province, with quite a substantial number of errors of detail. It shares with OH, directly or indirectly, a common source and is thus ultimately related to BC.

WC Winchester College Fellows' Library, MS 38, 94 fos. This is a late fourteenth-century MS, copied as the scribe himself reveals (fo. 1) from the Chancery version ('le record original des ditz extentz demorant en la Chauncellerie'), that is without doubt PC. It thus contains the spiritualities of both provinces. It follows the same order of dioceses as PC, taking into account that some of PC's membranes have since been misplaced. The codex ends abruptly in the middle of the Carlisle diocese.

The manuscripts form three clear groups, which can be categorized as the Exchequer, the papal and the diocesan: 1) The Exchequer versions (PA, PB, PC, WC, CM and OE) were derived from the rolls sent to the Exchequer soon after December 1294, for the initial purpose of collecting the royal tax of a half. Many of these rolls, and copies and adaptations of them, survive in the PRO. PC had been copied from the rolls soon after the 1318 reassessment of the north, and WC was derived from PC. Exchequer rolls of the reassessments of the northern dioceses were also the source for the York province section of BA. The first Exchequer registers have not survived. They were in all probability the direct source for CM and OE. As noted above the two extant Exchequer registers (PA for the Canterbury province and PB for the York province) are of different dates: to judge from the heading on Taxatio, p. 295 (PA, fo. 419) PA was compiled after the reign of Henry VI; and PB was compiled in the latter part of the fourteenth


It is clear from the fourteenth-century evidence itself that the papal and Exchequer versions were seen as distinct. See, for example, a partial list of total diocesan values, probably of the late fourteenth century, in a register of St Augustine Canterbury (Canterbury Dean and Chapter, Lit. MS E19, fo. 113) which gives three figures derived from 'Registrum Pape', 'Registrum Scaccarii' and 'Rotuli Compositi'.


Above, 68–9.

PB is in three distinct parts (with blank, currently unnumbered, folios separating them) which are not very clearly divided from each other in the Taxatio. The lists in the second and third sections are derived from the rolls transcribed in the first section. The heading in Taxatio, 333 (PB, fo. 56) relates to the whole of the second section (Taxatio, 333–9, from PB, fos 56–68v). Note also that the heading 'Karliolen' (Taxatio, 331, from PB, fo. 53) is a new main heading for the subsequent list, that is Taxatio, 332–3.
century, certainly after Easter 1354. Both registers were compiled, it seems, directly from rolls rather than from previous registers, but both contain references to previous registers.

2) The papal versions (BC and its descendants: the Canterbury province section of BA, and in large part OH, and also SC) were derived from the rolls held by one or both of the assessors/collectors of the sexennial tenth (actually collected for four years only: 1292–94, 1300), that is the bishops of Winchester and Lincoln. The bishop of Lincoln was replaced by Geoffrey of Vezzano in 1296, and completely new collectors were appointed in 1300 (Robert de Elenton, abbot of Waltham, and Ralph Baldock, dean of St Paul’s).

BC may have been put together for one of the pairs of collectors of the sexennial tenth between 1296 and 1300, or perhaps for the papal collectors of the triennial tenth which succeeded the sexennial in 1301 (the bishop of London and Bartholomew of Ferentino). Or perhaps BC was owned ab initio by the resident papal collector, who at the time of the sexennial tenth was Geoffrey of Vezzano. Certainly it is likely to have passed into the hands of the succession of resident papal collectors, and it was probably for the same papal collectors that BA was compiled, with its completely new version for the York province based upon the reassessments as in the Exchequer. In the later middle ages BC and BA were not the only papal versions: the added references in CU show that there was later at least one other 'registrum papae'.

3) The diocesan versions (CU, LA and LF) are very closely linked

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24 Taxatio, 322–3, from PB, fo. 37v: the cancellations here are copied directly from the roll which is the source (PRO E179/63/3) and are in the same hand as the main text.

25 The references to a register in PA, fo. 123v (Taxatio, 75–6) are taken directly from a schedule sewn on to an extant roll (PRO E179/68/74) relating to the archdeaconry of Stow; and concerning an early Exchequer register (or registers) relating to the Canterbury province see also a record dated 1373 (about churches belonging to Westminster Abbey) in Cambridge University Library, Kk.5.29, fos 16–17, which refers to the churches and their values 'iuxta registra domini regis in scaccario suo'. The references to registers in PB are all in the last section of extracts concerning totals (PB, fos 69–81, as Taxatio, 340–6). Some of these references clearly relate to the first section of PB itself (see fo. 74v, as Taxatio, 343: 'ut supra secundum registrum'), but fo. 74, also as Taxatio, 343, contains a reference to an ancient register ('in antiquo registro et non in novo registro'). The corrected assessment of the church of Scarborough as recorded in the items on the king's memoranda roll for the Trinity term 1342 (as noted in PB, fo. 11, as Taxatio, 304) appears also in BA, fo. 396, with the reference 'in registro scaccarii domini regis': this register cannot, therefore, postdate BA itself, but this does not exclude the possibility that it is a reference to PB rather than to an earlier register.

26 Lunt, 'Collectors' accounts', 103–4.

27 Ibid., 104.


29 Above, 72–3.
and appear to be separate and very early compilations, of about the same date, derived from the same collection of rolls, which are often different in detail from either the Exchequer version or the papal version.

What, then, do these manuscripts have to offer? While they all in one place or another provide a reading or an annotation of significance for a final new edition, four of them, apart from the Exchequer versions, are of special importance: BC and the closely related CU, LA and LF. The Exchequer versions are well represented by PA and PB as in *Taxatio*, though this text must be checked diocese by diocese with the Exchequer rolls where these survive or with early copies of the Exchequer rolls, notably PC; but the rather less reliable and later copies of WC, CM and OE can be largely discarded. BC is an early and reliable papal version; as a copy, for the Canterbury province section, BA is useful mainly as a check against the occasionally undecipherable in BC, whereas OH and SC have very little of substance to offer. Taken together the impressive early compilations CU, LA and LF very successfully represent a distinct diocesan version. Essentially, therefore, the main text of the printed edition needs to be checked against the Exchequer rolls, re-collated with BC and collated for the first time with CU/LA/LF.

This is not however, by any means, the whole story. It is not possible to establish a consistent editorial procedure for the whole text. As stressed already, each separately assessed diocese must be treated on its own merits. CU/LA/LF seem to represent especially early versions of the assessment; but, even if a clear chronology of compiling and copying could be established, the earliest should not necessarily be regarded as the most authoritative. In the years immediately following 1291–92 further inquiries in some dioceses resulted in either additions or subtractions. These must certainly be taken into account, for they represent important corrections to the work of the original assessors. Also, more detailed versions are provided by different manuscripts for different dioceses. For example, the Exchequer text in the *Taxatio* has, on the one hand, an abbreviated version for the archdeaconry of Middlesex in London diocese but, on the other hand, a fuller version than the other texts for the diocese of Salisbury. While all extant codices, taken together, can be used to provide a core text, with the eradication of virtually all

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30 They may well be based, for most dioceses, on the earliest assessment rolls; but it is difficult, as yet, to be more precise than c. 1300. Lunt's suggestion (*Financial relations*, 688) that these MSS can be dated to before 1297 because they do not embody corrections made as a result of a petition from the prior of Hereford presented in March 1297 (*Taxatio*, 177 from BC, fos 87v–88) is not convincing.
errors of transcription (and every manuscript has its crop of errors), how that core text is arrived at will differ from diocese to diocese. For some dioceses, the items as in the printed Taxatio, duly checked and corrected, can be accepted as the core text; but this does not apply to others, for example the dioceses of Norwich, Hereford, Exeter, York.

Collating the complete or near-complete codices of the assessment is only the first stage. A number of early diocesan rolls survive in addition to the large number of extant Exchequer rolls. The relationship of each of these rolls to the Exchequer, papal and diocesan versions must be studied so that the importance of each roll for the new edition of the diocese in question can be established. Those surviving rolls which were written within a short period of the assessment, and which contain lists of spiritualities, are as follows: BL Harleian Roll K38 and K39 (Salisbury diocese); BL Harleian Roll N33 (Chichester and Winchester dioceses); BL Harleian Charter E10 (Ely diocese); Oxford Bodleian Library, Bodley Roll 2531 (archdeaconries of Oxford, Buckingham, Bedford, Huntingdon and Northampton, excluding Rutland); and Lincoln, Diocesan Records, Misc. Roll 3 (Lindsey, part of archdeaconry of Lincoln) and Misc. Roll 4 (archdeaconry of Leicester, plus Rutland).

These rolls represent, however, just a small fraction of the many manuscript copies of the assessment which must be collated for each diocese. Already in 1939 Lunt had listed about 180 copies of valuations of dioceses or parts of dioceses,32 though a good number of these contain temporalities alone. Many of the copies relating to each diocese are certainly virtually identical, though it is rarely possible to be certain of this without a thorough analysis. The thorough analysis is necessary since there are extant, certainly for some dioceses, much fuller versions of the assessment than those which found their way into the Exchequer, papal or diocesan registers. In some areas more detailed versions had clearly been abbreviated at a very early stage in the compiling of the rolls on which the registers were based. Lists of the benefices of the Canterbury diocese, for example, survive which include all the minor benefices which did not exceed six marks in value.33 And similar more complete lists for

31 As revealed on m.10d the text of this copy, and probably the copy itself, was drawn up on 18 November 1296 and in the making of the copy some items were subtracted ('... post subtractiones factas in confectione rolutorum in octabis Sancti Martini anno domini millesimo CC nonagesimo sexto ...'). Franklin ('The assessment of benefices', 83 n. 49) linked this roll with the diocesan versions CU, LA and LF.
32 Lunt, Financial relations, 669–75.
33 See Denton, 'The valuation of the ecclesiastical benefices', 243.
the archdeaconries of Oxford, Buckingham, Bedford, Huntingdon and Northampton are to be found in BL Cotton Vesp. E xxii, fos 121–144v. 34

Thus, a new edition comprising an accurate core text, plus significant additional and variant readings from all the known manuscripts, will be very different from that used by scholars for almost 200 years. It is essential that the material be provided in a format, or rather in formats, which satisfy the needs of modern scholarship. The first need is for a new hard-copy edition, with modern identifications of all named churches and chapels, plus grid references, and indexes to both the modern spelling of names and the medieval spellings. All variant medieval spellings of names are being collected from the manuscripts compiled within a few years of the assessment, in addition to the Exchequer version as in the *Taxatio*. Of the complete texts this includes BC, LA, LF, CU, PC and (although a little later) OH. Variants spellings from other early manuscripts of single dioceses or parts of dioceses will be added as the work proceeds.

In addition, it is essential that all the many churches which were appropriated to monasteries be noted and the monasteries identified. It was, after all, the monasteries that owned the rectorial income of such churches and thus paid taxes on that income. Work on identifying all the monastic patrons, which are referred to only very haphazardly in the *Taxatio*, and, indeed, in all the manuscript versions of the assessment, is about to begin. A new hard-copy edition must thus provide full and easy access to the whole text with annotations.

All this material will be made available for publication by downloading from the database tables. Far from then being moribund the database must then become accessible as a flexible research tool of the greatest importance for all those working on the later medieval church. Electronic publication in CD-ROM form is a possibility, but it is looking more and more likely that on-line publication will provide a much more satisfactory service. Electronic publication will have some immeasurable advantages over the printed text. It will be possible to search any parts of the database and to re-assemble and produce reports upon any fields of the database tables, which are linked by ‘keys’ identifying each ecclesiastical benefice. Future researchers may wish, for example, to study the differences in parochial structure from one area to another, or to examine the partition of the income of parish churches between incumbents, portion-

34 The section for Buckingham is edited in Franklin, ‘The assessment of benefices’, 86–98.
holders and pension-holders, or to use the data for the mapping of
the income, derived largely from tithes, by relating that income to
the acreage of parishes.\footnote{As a pilot project just such a map has already been produced of the Cheshire parishes: see Jeffrey Denton and Beryl Taylor, 'Cheshire parishes circa 1292' in The new historical atlas of Cheshire, eds A.D.M. Phillips and C.B. Phillips (forthcoming).}

The database has been deliberately created in two distinct sec­
tions, one concerned with the text of the assessment, with additions
and variants to the text, and the other with what can best be
described as an ecclesiastical gazetteer of medieval England and
Wales. One of the first of the ‘gazetteer’ tables provides a detailed
statement of the constituent parts of each benefice as listed in 1291–
92, with modern identifications; but a number of other tables are
being developed which go beyond the evidence provided by the
1291–92 assessment and beyond the first aim of re-editing the
assessment. These include tables on patrons and on incumbents,
frequently identifiable especially from bishops’ registers, and on
church dedications, for which many sources supply evidence. The
table on patrons will be essential for a project on patronage and
profit in parochial benefices which has just been launched with
funding from the Leverhulme Trust. The database thus provides a
kernel of fundamental information around which research on all
aspects of the parochial organization of medieval England and Wales
can be developed.