Darum tithes database

The Durham Priory accounting material contains upwards of sixteen thousand receipts of tithes from individual townships or groups of townships over a period of 266 years.¹ This database contains only those tithe receipts which have been selected for use as the most reliable indicators of changing arable output: the inclusion of additional data, without consultation of the accounts themselves, would be likely to lead to confusion. Data from tithes received beyond the rivers Tyne and Tees have been excluded because of the common practice of leasing these more distant receipts for periods of more than one year. It should be noted that it is not always possible to tell if tithes from within the Tyne Tees region have been leased for more than one year. For descriptions of the Durham Priory tithe data, and discussions on their use as indicators of changing agricultural production, see:

——— 'Managing Tithes in the Late Middle Ages', *Agricultural History Review* 53 (2005), 125-140.

In addition to the data extracted from the Durham Priory accounting material, the database also contains price data gathered from various sources and used for the deflation of the cash tithe indices. References for these sources are given below.

TABLE ‘indices’: these data are composite deflated cash tithe indices as used in *Peasants and production*. The method by which these indices were calculated is

FIELD ‘Harvest year’: these are the years of the harvests from which tithes were collected. These are usually, though not always, the opening years of the accounts from which the tithe data were collected.

FIELD ‘Index’: these are composite deflated cash tithe indices. In other words, they are estimates of the production of cereals and legumes in the Durham Priory parishes between the Tyne and Tees indexed against 1291-5 levels (i.e. 1291-5 levels = 100).

TABLE ‘cash tithe data’: this table includes only those cash tithe data which were used in calculating the indices for deflation.

FIELD ‘Harvest year’: these are the years of the harvests from which tithes were collected. These are usually, though not always, the opening years of the accounts from which the tithe data were collected.

FIELD ‘Document’: these are references to the document from which the tithe data were collected. The year refers to the opening year of the account. The letters correspond to the office holder or type of document (a = almoner, b = bursar, ce = cellarer, ch = chamberlain, en = enrolled manorial account, h = hostiller, ch = chamberlain, co = commoner, f = prior of Finchale, g = granator, j = master of Jarrow, pofstm = proctor of St Margaret, rentroll = 1270 rentroll, soft = list of tithe sales, s = sacrist, stat = status document, VALOR = Valor Ecclesiasticus, w = master of Wearmouth; numbers succeeding the letters indicate that there is more than one account from a particular year for that office). These documents are easily traceable in Piper, ‘Medieval Accounting Material’.

FIELD ‘Parish’: these are the parishes in which the vills from which tithes were collected are situated. In this part of northern England, the parishes contained several discreet townships or vills. Modern placenames are used but refer to the medieval parishes.

FIELD ‘Vill’: these are the vills, or townships, from which tithes were collected. In this part of northern England, the parishes contained several discreet townships or vills. Modern placenames are used but refer to the medieval vills.

FIELD ‘£’: these are the cash sums for which tithes were sold. The cash sums are given in pounds, shillings and pence in the accounts themselves but are given as decimalised pounds here (i.e. £10 13s. 4d. is 10.3333).

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2 B. Dodds, *Peasants and Production in the Medieval North-East* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 000-000.

3 Ibid., 000-000.

4 Ibid., 000-000.
TABLE ‘prices’: this contains the price data used to deflate the cash tithe data. Durham prices have been used wherever possible but are not available for the whole series.

FIELD ‘Harvest year’: these refer to the year in which the produce sold was harvested. For example, prices from 1270 refer to produce sold from the harvest of 1270, even though some of the actual sales may have been made in 1271.

FIELDS ‘Wheat (s)’, ‘Barley (s)’, ‘Legumes (s)’, ‘Oats (s)’: prices are given in shillings per quarter. The following sources have been used:

Boxes C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8(i) and C8(ii), Beveridge Price History Archive (British Library of Political and Economic Science).
J. E. T. Rogers, A History of Agriculture and Prices in England from the Year after the Oxford Parliament 1239, to the Commencement of the Continental War, 1793, 7

When no data survive from any series, the mean of preceding and succeeding years’ prices has been calculated.

TABLE ‘grain tithe’: this table contains quantities of grain from tithes kept in hand, that is tithes that were collected by the priory’s agents rather than sold. Like in the ‘cash tithe data’ table, only receipts which apparently represent quantities of tithe grain received for a full harvest have been included. This means quantities of grain received which appear to be only part of the tithe have been excluded, as have quantities received for tithes sold in return for predetermined quantities of grain.

FIELD ‘Harvest year’: these are the years of the harvests from which tithes were collected. These are usually, though not always, the opening years of the accounts from which the tithe data were collected.

FIELD ‘Document’: these are references to the document from which the tithe data were collected. The year refers to the opening year of the account. The letters correspond to the office holder or type of document (a = almoner, b = bursar, ce = cellarer, ch = chamberlain, en = enrolled manorial account, h = hostiller, ch = chamberlain, co = commoner, f = prior of Finchale, g = granator, j = master of Jarrow, pofstm = proctor of St Margaret, rentroll = 1270 rentroll, soft = list of tithe sales, s = sacrist, stat = status document, VALOR = Valor Ecclesiasticus, w = master of Wearmouth; numbers succeeding the letters indicate that there is more than one account from a
particular year for that office). These documents are easily traceable in Piper, ‘Medieval Accounting Material’.

FIELD ‘Parish’: these are the parishes in which the vills from which tithes were collected are situated. In this part of northern England, the parishes contained several discreet townships or vills. Modern placenames are used but refer to the medieval parishes.

FIELD ‘Vill’: these are the vills, or townships, from which tithes were collected. In this part of northern England, the parishes contained several discreet townships or vills. Modern placenames are used but refer to the medieval vills.

FIELD ‘Grain type’: these are the types of arable produce collected as tithes, including both cereals and legumes.

FIELD ‘Quarters’: the totals are in quarters. The accounts record receipts in various measures for quantities smaller than one quarter. These have been given in the table as proportions of a quarter and have been adjusted to include any estimates of amounts of grain left in sheaves. In some cases, estimated quantities remaining were recorded in the current year account and actual quantities threshed from the previous year’s harvest were recorded in the following year’s account. In these cases, the actual threshed quantities have been added to the original tithe receipt.

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5 Ibid., 000-000.  
6 Ibid., 000-000.