

Caput I. Domus Dei

Harold Rex Anglorum and **Gulielmus Dux Normannorum**. Harold Godwinson was crowned king on 5 January. However, two others claimed the throne: Harold Hardrada, King of Norway and William, Duke of Normandy. In quick succession Harold Godwinson fought two crucial battles. He defeated Harold Hardrada, 25 September. Shortly after the Battle of Stamford Bridge; William, Duke of Normandy, landed on the south coast of England on 28 September. Harold fought William at Hastings on 14 October, and died in battle. From Saxon rule to Norman rule, everything changed...

William was crowned king at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day, 1066. By 1085, he was short of money. But, how do you collect taxes, if you do not know your worth? The decision was to conduct a survey. The survey was done by Norman inquisitors who spoke French and Latin. The Normans referred to the survey as **descriptio**, **enrolling**. Later, they called the collected pages: **brevia**, **writings** and still later: either **liber**, **book** or **carta**, **charter**

The Anglo-Saxons regarded the survey as a final authority, akin to their concept of **law** and **judgement** from the **Old English** noun **doom**. The illusion was completed when the survey was stored in a church, **Domus Dei**, the **House of God**. Either by false etymology or deliberate word play from **doomsdei** to **doomsday**. **Domesday** is first cited as a legal term in 1221

This three-part series examines the development of Latin from the Norman conquest to the Tudor-era through legal texts

The Domesday Survey

The domesday survey cites 268,984 persons and 13,418 places

Comitissa Godeva, **Countess Godiva**, resident of **Coleshelle Hundred**; is a woman whom we know well

Lady Godiva, her name in Old English, **Godgifu** or **Godgyfu**, means **gift of God**, and **Godiva** is the Latinised version. She was the wife of Leofric, Earl of Mercia. She and her husband are remembered for their establishing dwelling houses for Christian men and women. **Ego, Godiva Comitissa diu istud desideravi...**, I, **Countess Godiva**, **have desired this for a long time...** is the opening sentence for the monastery of Spalding's charter. Outliving her husband, she was one of the few Saxons cited in the **Domesday** survey and, uniquely; a woman. She died from age and weariness shortly after the Norman conquest. Thorold, her brother is also cited in the survey. He was the sheriff of Lincolnshire

Cited below is the Countess Godiva survey entry. The sentence **tempore Regis Edwardi...**, **in the time of King Edward** infers the original 1086 entry was updated sometime on or after 20 November 1272, the date of King Edward's coronation. The survey is written in Latinized Norman French

TERRA COMITISSAE ¹ GODEVAE . <i>In Coleshelle hundredo.</i> ² COMITISSA GODEVA tenuit ³ tempore Regis Edwardi AILSPEDE . <i>Ibi sunt quattuor hide.</i> ⁴ Terra est VIII carrucis. ⁵ <i>Ibi sunt VIII villani</i> ⁶ et I bordarius ⁷ cum II carrucis et dimidia. ⁸ Silua habet I leuugam ⁹ et dimidiam longitudine et unam leuugam latitudine. Tempore Regis Edwardi valebat XL solidos ¹⁰ et post et modo XXX solidos. Ipsa comitissa tenuit in ADERESTONE III hidas. Terra est V carrucis. Ibi sunt XI villani et II bordarii et I seruus ¹¹ cum III carrucis. Ibi VI acrae ¹² prati. Silua II leuugas longitudine et II leuugas latitudine. Valuit XL solidos, modo LX solidos.	The Land of Countess Godiva. In Coleshelle Hundred. Countess Godeva held Alspath in the time of King Edward. There are 4 hides. [There] is land for 8 ploughs. There are 8 villeins and I bordar with 2½ ploughs. The wood is [has] 1½ leagues in length and 1 league in breadth. In the time of King Edward, it was worth 40 shillings, and afterwards and now 30 shillings. The same countess held 3 hides in Atherstone. [There] is land for 5 ploughs. There are 11 villeins and 2 bordars and 1 serf with 4 ploughs. There are 6 acres of meadow. The wood 2 leagues in length and 2 leagues in breadth. It was worth 40 shillings, now 60 shillings.
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Footnotes:

- comitissa**, -ae. 1st declension feminine noun. Latinized Norman French. Nobility, rank of countess
- hundredum**, -i. 2nd declension neuter noun. Latinized Old English. Land divided into hundred parts
- tenuit**. 3rd person singular perfect, Classical Latin 2nd conjugation verb. **teneo**. I hold. Translation: **she held**. The verb's position in the sentence is vernacular. The verb's English derivative is our noun: **tenant**
- hida**, -ae. 1st declension feminine noun. Latinized Old English. Land, equivalent to an acre
- carruca**, -ae. 1st declension feminine noun. Latinized Norman French. Team of eight plough oxen
- villanus**, -i. 2nd declension masculine noun. Latinized Norman French. High-ranking serf
- bordarius**, -i. 2nd declension masculine noun. Latinized Norman French. Middle-ranking serf
- dimidius**, -a, -um. 1st / 2nd declension adjective. Classical Latin. Unit of measure, half-quantity
- leuuga**, -ae. 1st declension feminine noun. Latinized Norman French. League (a length or distance)
- solidus**, -i. 2nd declension masculine noun. Latinized Old English. Coin, silver, shilling
- servus**, -i. 2nd declension masculine noun. Classical Latin. Low-ranking serf, **seruus** is mis-spelling
- acra**, -ae. 1st declension feminine noun. Latinized Old German. Land, equivalent to an acre