

THE CHARTERS, LETTERS, AND SEAL OF LADY NICHOLAA DE LA HAYE (d. 1230), LORD, CASTELLAN, AND SHERIFF

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ABSTRACT Lady Nicholaa de la Haye (d. 1230), heiress to the Lincolnshire barony of Brattleby, castellan of Lincoln, and sheriff of Lincolnshire, was one of the most important landholders and royal officials in the East Midlands during the First Barons' War (1215–1217). Although her political career and her role in defending Lincoln castle during the Second Battle of Lincoln (May 20, 1217) are well known, her letters and charters remain unstudied. This article brings together and analyses, for the first time ever, thirty-two letters and charters issued by Nicholaa. By considering their language, contents, and purpose, this article explores how Nicholaa articulated her power as a female baron and officeholder. It also provides a detailed examination of the men who regularly witnessed Nicholaa's charters, arguing that Nicholaa's sex proved no barrier to maintaining and rewarding a significant body of followers who assisted her in fulfilling her seigniorial responsibilities.

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Introduction

When the justices in eyre were at Lincoln in December 1218, an agreement was brokered between William of Huntingfield, a former rebel, and Lady Nicholaa de la Haye (d. 1230), the royalist castellan of Lincoln and former sheriff. During the First Barons' War (1215–1217), Nicholaa had received temporary grants of William's castle at Frampton and all his Lincolnshire estates after he forfeited them through his rebellion.¹ Yet, later, once the rebellion was over and William recovered seisin of his properties, he sued Nicholaa for the recovery of more than £273 in chattels, which he claimed she had taken from him after the restoration of peace. In Nicholaa, however, William faced a determined opponent, who successfully asserted her rights, so that William received no more than 30 marks of silver from her.² The impression of Nicholaa de la Haye that emerges from this episode is one of a formidable crown servant, a picture of her that endures in the historiography down to the present day.³ Even so, exceptional though Nicholaa was in some respects, she was also an experienced widow of baronial rank who, like her husbands, parents, and grandparents before her, was fully embedded within structures of regional lordship in the East Midlands as the honour of Brattleby's hereditary lord and constable of Lincoln castle.⁴

Curiously, although the intersections between Nicholaa's life as a widow (1214–1230) and national politics are relatively well-known, no attempt has been made until now to locate, collate, and study the thirty-two letters and charters issued by her. Yet, as this article shows, these documents are key to understanding the image that she wished to project in governing her estates and in articulating her authority within Lincolnshire. This article explores Nicholaa's self-representation and performance of lordship through her surviving acts. As a group, her extant deeds offer valuable insights into her territorial interests and strategies, as well as the identities of the men who served her in widowhood and who, as members of her following, helped her to cast a web of influence over local affairs. This article therefore advances

1 *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, ed. Hardy, 1.i: 167(x2); *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. Hardy, 1:249, 272.

2 *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre*, ed. Stenton, 233, no. 495.

3 For Nicholaa's life, see Petit-Dutaillis, "Une Femme de Guerre," 369–80; Johns, "Haie, Nicola de la"; Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 13–26; Huscroft, *Tales from the Long Twelfth Century*, 244–60; Connolly, *King John's Right Hand Lady*.

4 For Brattleby, see Sanders, *English Baronies*, 109.

scholarly understanding of how a female lord constructed and reinforced her position by recruiting men into her service, and illuminates the ties that bound a baronial woman and her retinue together.

Hitherto, women from the baronage and knightly class have often been overlooked in the historiography. Susan Johns's 2003 study *Noblewomen, Aristocracy, and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* was one of the first to address "women of the lesser nobility," observing similarities in these women's charters and those of countesses, whereby ladies routinely participated in property transfers as "grantors" and "co-grantors," and contributed to family strategies for estate administration.⁵ Hanna Kilpi's examination of the women of the Rumilly, Arches, and St Quentin families in Yorkshire also observed how these "lesser aristocratic" female landholders deliberately utilized "religious patronage" and "lord-vassal relationships," especially as heiresses and widows, to sustain their own regional "networks."⁶ Furthermore, Emma Cavell's research into the baronial women of the Welsh marcher dynasties in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has illuminated how these ladies "managed and defended estates, households and castles, founded religious houses ... and even involved themselves directly in high politics and intrigue."⁷ What has been lacking has been a detailed assessment of a female baron and officeholder's letters and charters.

Nicholaa's Background and Life: An Overview

A brief overview of Nicholaa's family background, life, and career provides the essential context for the analysis of her charters and letters that follows, supplying insights into the basis for Nicholaa's regional power in the East Midlands and how she emerged as a leading figure there through inheritance, marriage, and personal involvement in politics. Nicholaa de la Haye took her name from her family's ancestral lands in La Haie-du-Puits in Normandy.⁸ She was the granddaughter of Robert de la Haye, a servant of the Anglo-Norman king Henry I, who had married Muriel, the granddaughter of

⁵ Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy, and Power*, 161.

⁶ Kilpi, "Role of Lesser Aristocratic Women," 146. See also Ricketts, *High-Ranking Widows*.

⁷ See, especially, Cavell, "Aristocratic Widows," 57–82; Cavell, "Mortimer Women," 1–20 at 1. See also Mitchell, *Portraits of Medieval Women*.

⁸ Petit-Dutaillis, "Une Femme de Guerre," 369 n. 1.

Colswein of Lincoln, who was lord of Brattleby in 1086.⁹ After the death of Nicholaa's father, Richard de la Haye, in 1169, she inherited a third share of her father's lands in England and Normandy as the eldest of his three daughters and co-heiresses, although a later family arrangement saw Nicholaa take control of her father's English lands, while her two sisters, Gila, wife of Richard (II) du Hommet, and Isabella, wife of William de Rollours, retained his Norman lands.¹⁰ Nicholaa's husbands were charged scutage on sixteen knights' fees throughout the 1190s and early 1200s for Richard de la Haye's former barony.¹¹

Following a short-lived marriage to a landholder, William fitzErneis (d. ca. 1178), which resulted in the birth of her daughter, Matilda, Nicholaa married Gerard de Canville (d. 1214), whose family originally came from Canville-les-Deux-Églises in Normandy and whose father, Richard, held Middleton Stoney in Oxfordshire, along with other properties in Berkshire and Northamptonshire.¹² Gerard served as constable of Lincoln and sheriff of Lincolnshire early in Richard I's reign, until his and his wife's support for the king's brother, Count John of Mortain, led to Gerard's removal from his offices and the imposition of hefty financial penalties in 1194.¹³ Nicholaa and Gerard's former loyal service to Count John was, however, remembered and rewarded when John succeeded Richard as king of England: Gerard was reinstated as sheriff of Lincolnshire and accounted in person as sheriff at the royal exchequer at Midsummer 1199 and Michaelmas 1202, 1204, and 1205.¹⁴ When a nationwide royal inquiry was conducted into tenants-in-chief and their under-tenants in 1212, it was found that Swaton, Owmbly, Cherry Willingham, Cammeringham, and Brattleby in Lincolnshire, the lat-

9 For Colswein's lands, see *Lincolnshire Domesday*, ed. Foster and Longley, 118–24. For Colswein and his descendants, see Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, 1:175. For Robert, see Keats-Rohan, *Domesday Descendants*, 2:496–97.

10 For the division of lands, see *Bracton's Note Book*, ed. Maitland, 2:391–93, no. 503; *Charters of the Du Hommet Family*, nos. 120, 212 (thanks to Daniel Power for these references). For Richard de la Haye and his family, see Keats-Rohan, *Domesday Descendants*, 2:496.

11 *Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed. Hall, 1:84 (1194–1195), 110 (1196–1197), 171 (1201–1212).

12 *Great Roll of the Pipe for the Sixth Year of the Reign of King Richard the First*, ed. Stenton, 118–19 (hereafter all published pipe rolls appear in the format *Pipe Roll*, 6 *Richard I*); Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 15, fig. 1, 16; Golding, "Canville [Camville], Gerard de."

13 Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 17–18.

14 *List of Sheriffs*, 78.

termest being the caput of the La Haye barony, were held by Gerard and Nicholaa in demesne, while their tenants held lands of their fee in Barlings, Billingborough, Dembleby, Dry Doddington, Ewerby Thorpe, Faldingworth, Fillingham, Horbling, Hougham, Ingleby, Kexby, Marston, Minting, Newton by Folkingham, Pickworth, Reepham, Riseholme, Scawby, Scothern, Silk Willoughby, Spridlington, Stixwould, Sudbrooke, Thorpe, Threckingham, and Westby.¹⁵

Nicholaa's marriage to Gerard produced two living sons—Richard and Thomas—who both took their father's patronymic of Canville (Camville).¹⁶ After Gerard's death late in 1214, Nicholaa continued to serve as Lincoln's castellan in her own right and assumed independent control of the La Hayes' English estates.¹⁷ Around sixty years later, local jurors recalled how Nicholaa had held the constablenesship of Lincoln castle by the king's will in times of peace and war. They remembered how, on one of King John's visits to Lincoln in 1216, Nicholaa had proffered up the castle's keys and offered to surrender her custody, only for the king to insist that she remain in office, reflecting perhaps on her long history of loyal service to him.¹⁸ Nicholaa subsequently became one of the earliest women in England to be appointed to hold the office of sheriff, and she successfully defended Lincoln's royal castle against the baronial rebels throughout the First Barons' War.¹⁹ The final years of Nicholaa's life, however, witnessed a power struggle with the earl of Salisbury, Henry III's uncle, for control of Lincoln castle and the shrievalty; Nicholaa retained her constablenesship for prolonged periods until 1226, but lost the shrievalty for the final time at the end of 1217. Salisbury's desire to acquire Nicholaa's offices had been piqued by the marriage of his son, William (II) Longespée (ca. 1209–1250), to Nicholaa's granddaughter and

15 *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:169, 170, 179, 180, 183, 186, 188, 192 (1212 survey). See also *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:163 (an additional half carucate, Candleshoe wapentake).

16 Richard is noted in Golding, "Canville [Camville], Gerard de."

17 Gerard's date of death is confirmed by no. 18 in the handlist below.

18 *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 1:309, 315.

19 For Nicholaa's appointment as sheriff, see *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, ed. Hardy, 1.i:199b (with Philip Mark); *Patent Rolls, 1216–1225*, 20 (with Geoffrey de Serland as her deputy). For an earlier widow, Emma, viscountess of Rouen, who farmed Southampton in 1158, see Keats-Rohan, *Domesday Descendants*, 2:1139. For the problems of using the term "sheriff" in relation to "viscounts" and "viscountesses," see Hewer, "Epistemology of Translation."

heiress, Idonea de Canville.²⁰ When Nicholaa died in 1230, she was buried at Swaton, a parish church whose advowson lay in her hands.²¹ A schedule of the lands (listed in Table 5.1) that she held from the king in chief at her death survives in the National Archives.²² It shows that Nicholaa retained control of her modest barony until her death.²³

Table 5.1. Lands held by Nicholaa de la Haye as Tenant-in-Chief in 1230.

No. of Knights' Fees	Locations (listed as they appear in the schedule)
1	Swaton
½	Spanby
1	Billingborough
1	Horbling and Dembleby
1	Newton by Folkingham
1¾	Pickworth
1	Ewerby Thorpe ("Houstorp")
¾	Kirkby Underwood
1½	Ashby de la Launde and Marston
1	Silk Willoughby
2	Faldingworth, Scawby, Ingham, Bullington, and Kirkby
1	Riseholme
1¼	Fillingham
1	Ingleby
¼	Faldingworth
16 knights' fees in total	

20 Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 23–24.

21 *Rotuli Hundredorum*, 1:309 (death at Swaton); *Close Rolls, 1227–1231*, 458 (execution of her testament); *Rotuli Hugonis de Welles*, ed. Davis, 3:115, 118 (advowson of Swaton). Nicholaa's lands in Swaton were valued at £20 in 1219: *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:285.

22 The National Archives (hereafter TNA), C 60/30, m. 8 (schedule); *Calendar of the Fine Rolls* (15 Henry III), 1230–1231, no. 72.

23 Curiously, this schedule omits Brattleby, the caput of the La Haye barony. During her years as castellan, Nicholaa had also acquired former Jewish properties in Lincoln; *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:365 (1226–1228 survey); *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. Hardy, 1:530.

The Documents: Number and Distribution

Although the last twenty-five years have witnessed great advances in the publication of records associated with women from royal, ducal, and comital dynasties in medieval Western Europe, editions of letters and charters issued by women like Nicholaa de la Haye, who came from baronial families, generally remain far fewer in number than those issued by men.²⁴ In part, this situation reflects the challenges faced by researchers of the lesser aristocracy. Secular cartularies documenting title deeds associated with specific families have survived less often than those produced for religious houses.²⁵ The survival rates of deeds issued by women are also lower than those for men. After all, the restricted property rights enjoyed by women meant that the occasions when they were able or motivated to issue charters were more limited than those of their fathers, husbands, and sons. Direct male heirs were preferred to female heirs in the descent of estates held by knight service, so that daughters usually only succeeded to family lands as co-heiresses in the absence of sons in the same generation.²⁶ Upon marriage, a wife's property passed into the power and control of her husband, so that it was only as widows that many women of baronial status held lands in their own right.²⁷ Furthermore, women's entitlement to property, even in widowhood, was often limited and temporary in nature. Common-law dower, for instance, usually gave a widow a life interest in a third of her husband's property, with reversion to his heir or heirs on her death.²⁸

Yet, Nicholaa's position between 1214 and 1230 as a widowed heiress of baronial status, who also held public office, clearly made her written acts worth preserving as evidence for legal title. The texts of at least twenty-six charters and two letters issued by Nicholaa de la Haye survive today, together with references to four others that are now lost.²⁹ Four extant documents are original single-sheet charters written on parchment: one is housed in the Duchy of Lancaster archive in the National Archives, while the

24 See, especially, *Charters of Duchess Constance*, ed. Everard and Jones; Thompson, "Matilda, Countess of the Perche," 81–88; "Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters."

25 See, for example, Davis, *Medieval Cartularies*, 1–242 ("Cartularies of Religious Houses"), 243–83 ("Secular Cartularies").

26 See, for example, *Glanvill*, ed. Hall, 75–79.

27 *Glanvill*, ed. Hall, 80, 85, 108, 58–68.

28 *Glanvill*, ed. Hall, 58–69; *Bracton*, ed. Woodbine, 3:398, 411.

29 This figure excludes final concords. See nos. 1–32 in the handlist below. Hereafter, references to the handlist will be cited as "Handlist, nos. 1–3."

others are in the collections of the dean and chapter of Lincoln cathedral, deposited in the Lincolnshire Archives.³⁰ The survival of the former can be explained by the passage of Nicholaa's lands to the earls and later dukes of Lancaster via marriage. Idonea de Canville's daughter and heiress, Margaret Longespée (ca. 1248–1309), married Henry de Lacy (1249–1311), earl of Lincoln; and Margaret's daughter and heiress, Alice de Lacy (1281–1348), married Thomas (ca. 1278–1322), earl of Lancaster.³¹ The survival of the latter group of charters among Lincoln cathedral's muniments is not entirely surprising in view of Nicholaa's role as castellan of Lincoln and the cathedral's proximity to the royal fortress.³² After all, it is also within the dean and chapter's archive that the only known copy of letters patent, where Nicholaa acted in her official capacity as "castellan" ("castellana") of Lincoln, is preserved in the fourteenth-century *Registrum*. Nicholaa issued these letters patent jointly with her shrieval deputy, Geoffrey de Serland, between January and May 1217.³³ Judging from the extant originals, Nicholaa's charters were sealed *sur double queue* ("on a double tail") with a parchment tag or on coloured cords.³⁴ Cords were employed on a charter recording a grant by Nicholaa to Lincoln cathedral, suggesting that the prestige of the grant may have merited this showy presentation.³⁵

Most extant documents issued by Nicholaa de la Haye survive as transcriptions in the cartularies of religious houses. No fewer than eleven charters are preserved in the cartulary of Castle Acre priory, Norfolk, four in the cartulary of Barlings abbey, Lincolnshire, four in the archives of Lincoln cathedral (three charters and the aforementioned letters patent), two (one charter and one text of letters) in the cartulary of Combe abbey, Warwickshire, two in the now-lost cartulary of Haverholme priory, Lincolnshire, one in the cartulary of Spalding priory, Lincolnshire, one in the cartulary of Newhouse abbey, Lincolnshire, and one in a fourteenth-century copy of grants

30 See Handlist, nos. 1, 23–25.

31 For Idonea and William Longespée, see Lloyd, "Longespée, Sir William (c. 1209–1250)." For Margaret and Henry de Lacy, see Hamilton, "Lacy, Henry de." For Alice de Lacy, see Wilkinson, "Lacy, Alice de."

32 Hill, *Medieval Lincoln*, 90, 105.

33 Handlist, no. 32. Geoffrey was a former household knight of King John: Church, *Household Knights*, 125–26.

34 Handlist, nos. 1, 23–25.

35 Handlist, no. 24. This was another sealing practice associated with lay magnates: Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, 217.

made to Blanchelande abbey in Normandy.³⁶ These were all religious houses to which Nicholaa, her natal kin, her husbands, and/or her tenants made gifts of property or rights, indicating their importance as focal points for spiritual and secular loyalties within the La Haye honour.

The large number of documents issued by Nicholaa that are preserved in the Castle Acre priory cartulary can, perhaps, be explained by the fact that this Cluniac community had a long-standing connection with the La Hayes as benefactors, dating back to her grandfather Robert's day.³⁷ Nicholaa's parents, Richard de la Haye and his wife Matilda, and Nicholaa's paternal uncle Ralph de la Haye had, however, also favoured the Premonstratensian Order, even to the extent of establishing different communities of the same order in 1154–1155, one in Normandy and one in England. Richard de la Haye and Matilda founded the Premonstratensian abbey of Blanchelande in the Norman diocese of Coutances, a community that served as their mausoleum and was later patronized by Nicholaa's younger sister Gila, her husband Richard (II) du Hommet, constable of Normandy, and her son William.³⁸ Ralph de la Haye founded Barlings abbey in Lincolnshire with Richard de la Haye's support.³⁹ Nicholaa de la Haye confirmed her parent's gift to Blanchelande of the vill of Cammeringham in Lincolnshire, and her uncle's and father's gifts to Barlings of the island of Oxney in Barlings and of the vill of Barlings itself, together with further donations made by her tenants.⁴⁰ Nicholaa also confirmed grants by her tenants to the Premonstratensian canons of Newhouse abbey, the parent house of Barlings, and to the Gilbertine community at Haverholme priory.⁴¹ Spalding priory, a Benedictine house associated with her father and the descendants of Colswein of Lincoln, received a new grant of rents from her.⁴² The Cistercian community at Combe abbey in Warwickshire, on the other hand, had no prior connection with the La Hayes, having been founded by Gerard's father, Richard de Canville, in 1150, in the

36 See Handlist, nos. 2–21, 23–27, and 32 below.

37 See British Library (hereafter BL), Harley MS 2110, fols. 70r–73r.

38 *Magni Rotuli Scaccarii Normanniae*, ed. Stapleton, 1:cxlv; 2:clxxxiv; Colvin, *White Canons*, 72. For summaries of the grants to Blanchelande, see *Inventaire-Sommaire des Archives Départementales*, 27.

39 BL, Cotton MS Faustina B. I, fol. 208v; Caley, Ellis, and Bandinel, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 6.ii:915; Colvin, *White Canons*, 70–73.

40 Handlist, nos. 4–6. A cell of Blanchelande was established at Cammeringham: Colvin, *White Canons*, 72.

41 Handlist, nos. 20–21, 26. For Newhouse and Barlings, see Colvin, *White Canons*, 70.

42 BL, Harley MS 742, fol. 219r–v; *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 3:218, no. xii.

presence of Gerard his son, who later confirmed his father's endowment.⁴³ Combe was the only religious foundation documented as receiving a cash sum from Nicholaa, in this case 100s. from Gerard's goods, so that the monks there might mark the anniversary of his death, reflecting Nicholaa's spiritual responsibilities towards her late husband and, perhaps, her concern to see through his final wishes for the welfare of his soul.⁴⁴

Self-Representation in Nicholaa's Letters and Charters

The language employed in Nicholaa's letters and charters reveal a great deal about how she presented herself as a baronial woman to others. Nicholaa, who was perhaps either named for Lincoln (rendered "Nicole" in Anglo-Norman) or in recognition of her parents' devotion to St Nicholas, the saint to whom Blanchelande was dedicated, consistently employed her natal family name of La Haye ("Haia," "Haya," "la Haia," "la Haie," and "la Haye") in her documents.⁴⁵ In four charters, she was styled "daughter" or "daughter and heir" of Richard de la Haye, reflecting her decision to identify herself with the father from whom she had inherited her English estates and her claim to the constablership of Lincoln, rather than with either of her spouses.⁴⁶ This nomenclature, combined with the image and legend that Nicholaa employed on her seal, left all who saw her deeds in no doubt as to the origins of her wealth, status, and title to the properties named within them.

Nicholaa's pointed, oval seal impression is still attached to two of her original charters, one made in uncoloured wax and another, of which just a fragment survives, in red wax; both depict a woman standing, facing half towards her left, with long, unbound hair. She is shown wearing a belted gown and mantle, with her right hand placed on her hip and a bird perched on her left hand.⁴⁷ An early modern transcription in black ink of another original charter of Nicholaa's, now lost, which concerns a grant of lands to Geoffrey Angevin, is also preserved, with a simple line drawing of her seal,

43 See BL, Cotton Vitellius MS A. I, fols. 37r, 39r. The foundation charter is printed in Caley, Ellis, and Bandinel, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 5:584, no. i.

44 Handlist, nos. 18–19.

45 Handlist, nos. 1–32. The latter suggestion is from Daniel Power.

46 Handlist, nos. 5, 6, 11, and 26.

47 Handlist, nos. 1 and 24. For photographs of Nicholaa's seal, see Dryburgh, *Royal Seals*, 127 (TNA, DL 25/2890); Taylor, *Lincoln Cathedral Library*, 9 (Lincolnshire Archives, D&C, Dij/81/2/33).

in British Library, Lansdowne MS 863, fol. 77r.⁴⁸ This drawing is a crude representation of the same image on Nicholaa's extant seal impressions: she is portrayed with long, flowing hair trailing out behind her; she is dressed in the same style of gown and mantle, with her hands positioned in the same way. The oval shape and the stylized, standing portrait of a woman attired in this manner and holding a bird, perhaps a bird of prey, was entirely in keeping with the shape and images adopted by other aristocratic women for their seals in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁴⁹

Like other male and female lay lords in this era, Nicholaa also used a counterseal, a "small private seal" that she probably carried with her.⁵⁰ In common with other early counterseals, Nicholaa's was a gem engraved, in her case, with a figure walking to the left and holding an object similar to a sword in its right hand.⁵¹ Interestingly, Nicholaa's seal legend, like the text of her charters, makes no mention of her husbands, but describes her instead as the daughter of Richard de la Haye ("SIGILLVM NICHOLAE FILIAE RICARDI DE HAIA"). Her designation as a "daughter" was one found on the seal legends of other female contemporaries, who deliberately chose like her to identify as heiresses, and was less commonly employed on English and French women's seal legends than the kinship term "wife."⁵²

As an important heiress, Nicholaa therefore advertised her natal family connections in the language that she used to describe herself in her acts and on her seal legend as a means of reinforcing her authority.⁵³ Furthermore, her power to act legitimately and alienate lands and rights lawfully in her own right as a widow, and to act as a warrantor for her tenants, was clearly stated by the scribes who drafted her deeds. They routinely noted her "free widowhood," her "legitimate widowhood," her "widowhood," her "established power," her "free power," her "full power," her "legitimate

48 Handlist, no. 22.

49 A bird of prey advertised the seal owner's aristocratic status, since hawking was an elite past time. It also potentially conveyed a message about victory over sexual desire, an appropriate image for a woman who wanted to reassure those who saw her seal of her status, continence, and virtue: Coss, *Lady in Medieval England*, 38; Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy, and Power*, 127–30 (which omits Nicholaa's seal).

50 Harvey and McGuiness, *Guide to British Medieval Seals*, 58.

51 See Handlist, no. 1.

52 Bedos-Rezak, "Medieval Women," 4.

53 For other heiresses who did this, see Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth-Century Lincolnshire*, 77–78.

power,” her “proper power,” and her “power.”⁵⁴ The message conveyed by these phrases was broadly the same: Nicholaa was fully entitled to engage in these transactions as a woman because she was an unmarried, widowed landholder, no longer under a husband’s legal coverture. Intriguingly, just a few of the extant texts do not expressly document her widowed status. This is true of Nicholaa’s notification of her donation of 100s. to Combe abbey for the posthumous commemoration of her late husband, Gerard de Canville, and her later letters about this gift, presumably because her widowed status was implicit in the business with which these documents were concerned.⁵⁵ Elsewhere, Nicholaa’s widowed status went unrecorded in a brief entry, possibly a summary text, taken from the Haverholme priory cartulary, in a notification whereby she acknowledged that the prior and monks of Castle Acre were to have all the tenements which they had received from her antecessors in alms, peacefully and quietly, and in a notification confirming the homage and service of Peter fitzElstan to Spalding priory.⁵⁶

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the letters of protection that Nicholaa issued as “castellan of Lincoln,” jointly with Geoffrey de Serland and at the express request of the papal legate, Guala Bicchieri, to the church, dean, canons, and clerks of Lincoln cathedral, her widowed status went unmentioned, since her office lent her the authority upon which she based her actions.⁵⁷ Issued at some point in 1217, presumably between Geoffrey’s appointment as her deputy sheriff in January and May 24, 1217, when Nicholaa lost custody, temporarily, of the castle and shrievalty to the earl of Salisbury, these letters were addressed to “All the faithful [people] of Lord H[enry], king of England.” They announced that Nicholaa and Geoffrey had taken “under the protection and keeping of the lord king and ourselves and of all his faithful [people]... the church of Lincoln..., the dean, canons, clerks of the glorious Virgin Mary, their households, houses, goods, and possessions, wherever they may lie in our power.” These letters patent went on to explain that no one was to cause them injury, suffering, or harm, suggesting something of their vulnerability during the First Barons’ War.⁵⁸

54 Handlist, nos. 1–16, 20, 22–26.

55 Handlist, nos. 18–19.

56 Handlist, nos. 21, 17, 27.

57 Handlist, no. 32. For Geoffrey’s appointment as Nicholaa’s deputy sheriff in January 1217, see *Patent Rolls, 1216–1225*, 20. Guala’s mandate is discussed in *Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala Bicchieri*, 38, no. 50.

58 Handlist, no. 32. For Nicholaa’s replacement by Salisbury, see *Patent Rolls, 1216–1225*, 65.

Contents and Significance

The contents of most of Nicholaa's charters and other letters broadly fall into two categories, revealing how she managed her barony in widowhood: twenty document grants by her of properties and rights to individuals and to religious communities in whose cartularies many of the texts of Nicholaa's acts are preserved;⁵⁹ and nine record confirmations of grants or gifts by other members of her natal family or tenants to religious houses.⁶⁰ Strikingly few of the charters concern her alienation of lands near her baronial caput at Brattleby or Lincoln castle. Notable exceptions are: a grant that Nicholaa made to Peter the Woad-Seller of all her land with houses in St Michael's parish, Lincoln; a grant that she made to Lincoln cathedral and William the dean of land within Eastgate in the Bail of Lincoln to allow the dean to enlarge his court; and her donation for the fabric of Lincoln cathedral of land between the entrance to the ancient cemetery and the houses of a former archdeacon of Bedford.⁶¹ The last two transactions were presumably intended to smooth her relationship with her wealthiest ecclesiastical neighbour in Lincoln, where she held office. Another grant by Nicholaa, of Duddington manor in Northamptonshire, served as a marriage portion to accompany the union of her granddaughter or niece, another Nicholaa, to Oliver, sixth baron Deyncourt. Oliver was a former rebel, and this marriage may also have served to facilitate political reconciliation once he returned to loyalty in the aftermath of the 1217 battle of Lincoln.⁶²

The majority of Nicholaa's property-related business, however, instead betrays an interest in extending and safeguarding her family's sphere of influence and wealth in Holland in southeast Lincolnshire. During both her marriages, Nicholaa was involved in consolidating her family's interests in Elloe wapentake in Holland, an area where "new" land was actively being reclaimed from the sea, the fens, and the marsh, settled by tenants, and brought into cultivation. This was, in part, a consequence of the rapid expansion in England's population during the twelfth century, which led to the reclamation of water-logged land, the assarting of woodland and scrubland, and the conversion of moorland and heathland into agricultural land, so that new settlements proliferated and new areas were used for arable and live-

59 Handlist, nos. 1–3, 9–16, 18, 22–25, 28–31.

60 Handlist, nos. 4–8, 20–21, 26–27.

61 Handlist, nos. 23–25.

62 Handlist, no. 31.

stock farming.⁶³ What has not been extensively remarked upon before is the role of women as baronial lords in promoting and aiding these initiatives.

Nicholaa, her husbands, and her kin were particularly active in land reclamation in the area around Sutton (Sutton in Holland) and Lutton, where the La Hayes had estates, as tenants of the northern baron Roger de Montbegon (d. 1226), and where they utilized Castle Acre priory's support in providing for the cure of souls in the new lands.⁶⁴ Nicholaa's first husband, William fitzErneis, confirmed his grandfather- and father-in-law's earlier gifts of churches, tithes, and lands to Castle Acre. He augmented these earlier gifts with an acre of land "at the marsh" for building a chapel, with Nicholaa's express consent, and again with her agreement donated a further three acres for building a new parish church in Sutton.⁶⁵ Nicholaa's second husband, Gerard de Canville, followed suit in 1187 by confirming Castle Acre priory in possession of the church of Sutton and the chapel of Lutton, with associated rights from his demesne and "from the conquest of the sea and the marsh made and to be made" there.⁶⁶ Other documents reveal that, during her second marriage, Nicholaa was actively involved with Gerard in reclaiming and settling these new lands, even to the point of petitioning her husband to act.⁶⁷ In spite of her legal subordination as a wife, she routinely participated in the co-lordship of her estates during both her marriages.

During her second widowhood, after Gerard died in late 1214, Nicholaa initially used the "new" lands at her disposal to bolster her position in South Lincolnshire by rewarding men in her service and introducing new tenants to this area. Henry de Johannisville was granted sixty-six acres of land "within the conquest of Sutton in Holland."⁶⁸ William fitzWilliam of Newton

63 For an overview, see Dyer, *Making a Living*, 101, 160–62. For the Lincolnshire context, see Hallam, *Settlement and Society*.

64 For a charter of Roger de Montbegon, referring to the fee in Sutton which Nicholaa and her forebears held from him, see BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 73r. The churches of Sutton and Lutton had been granted to Castle Acre priory by Robert, Nicholaa's grandfather, and this endowment confirmed and enhanced by Richard her father and Ralph her uncle: BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 70r–v; *English Episcopal Acta I*, 62–63, nos. 91–92.

65 BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 70v.

66 BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r. Gerard also confirmed Castle Acre in possession of further properties and rights: BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r.

67 BL, Harley MS 742, fol. 220r; Hallam, *Settlement and Society*, 21–23, 25, 27–29, 226.

68 Handlist, no. 2.

was another recipient of parcels of land in Sutton and Lutton.⁶⁹ Nicholas, the serjeant or servant (“serviens”) of Sutton, received a bovate of land in Sutton, apart from eight acres which Nicholaa substituted with another ten acres “in the new conquest of the marsh of Lutton.”⁷⁰ She gave Henry de Pereres twenty acres “in the new conquest of the marsh of Sutton.”⁷¹ The monks of Spalding were, similarly, the beneficiaries of a grant by Nicholaa of all the homage and service which Peter fitzElstan and Agnes his wife owed her from a tenement in Sutton.⁷² It seems likely that an acre of land that Nicholaa granted to Geoffrey Angevin,⁷³ and the eight acres that she gave to Simon fitzWilliam, lay in or near Sutton.⁷⁴

Significantly, Nicholaa also made a series of grants to Castle Acre priory of land in Sutton and Lutton. She granted Castle Acre a parcel of land comprising six acres in Sutton and Lutton, another comprising three acres there, and a third parcel comprising one acre in Sutton, together with separate grants of a villein and his offspring, with a messuage and an acre of land by Lutton chapel, and of a man called Simon Falkes.⁷⁵ Although there was undoubtedly a spiritual motivation behind these grants, they perhaps suggest a shift away from Nicholaa’s direct involvement in this specific region, and a willingness on Castle Acre’s part to enrich their holdings there. Perhaps these grants arose from a desire on her part to maintain a territorial interest and influence here that was at one remove from that which she and her family had previously enjoyed, and therefore without direct responsibility for either maintaining fen- and sea-banks or enforcing authority in settlements where manorial structures, customs, and rights around land-sharing were in flux and sometimes contested.⁷⁶

69 Handlist, nos. 28–29.

70 Handlist, no. 3.

71 Handlist, no. 10.

72 Handlist, no. 27.

73 Handlist, no. 22. Geoffrey Angevin’s land in Lutton is referenced in the main text of no. 4.

74 Handlist, nos. 1 (Simon fitzWilliam) and 22 (Geoffrey Angevin).

75 Handlist, nos. 11–12, 14–16.

76 On this, see Hallam, *Settlement and Society*, chaps. 1 and 6. Thanks to Hannah Boston’s advice here.

Witnesses: Nicholaa's Officers and Following

The ability to direct and dominate regional affairs successfully and exercise patronage was, arguably, a key facet of good, baronial lordship in the Middle Ages.⁷⁷ A great secular lord, whether male or female, usually relied upon a following of kin, advisors, and deputies to whom he or she delegated specific responsibilities and who also worked to maintain and “assert his [or her] prestige and power in the community at large.”⁷⁸ Although charter witness-lists have been employed profitably in earlier studies of male comital and baronial followings like those discussed below, they have seldom been used to identify the followers of female lords. Admittedly, such an approach is not without its problems. The relatively low survival rates of charters issued by elite women inevitably means that any conclusions we draw about the degree to which the more frequent witnesses represented people whom the issuing lord or lady saw and trusted on a day-to-day basis can only be tentative at best. Furthermore, the questions of why certain individuals attested grants, and whether indeed named witnesses were present when a property transaction occurred or was ceremonially completed, remain thorny ones.⁷⁹ Yet, as Dauvit Broun has argued, “the overwhelming likelihood is that witnesses [with a few exceptions] were normally present together on the occasions when their names were recorded.”⁸⁰ In Nicholaa de la Haye's case, we are fortunate that the witness-lists of no fewer than nineteen of her charters survive in whole or in part, thereby revealing the names of the men (no women are mentioned) who held office under her and/or were most regularly in attendance upon her.⁸¹ More than seventy laymen and eighteen men in religious orders witnessed her charters. By identifying the men who attested six or more of Nicholaa's charters, we can tentatively reconstruct the membership of her “inner circle” of followers and identify the men who

77 See, for instance, Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, 59; Veach, *Lordship in Four Realms*, 238.

78 Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, 149, 155.

79 On this, see, for example, Bates, “Prosopographical Study,” 89–102; Veach, *Lordship in Four Realms*, 258.

80 Broun, “Presence of Witnesses,” 270–71.

81 For the value of witness lists for reconstructing baronial and comital followings, see Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, chap. 8; Simpson, “*Familia* of Roger de Quincy,” 102–3, at 105.

were probably amongst her most trusted advisors.⁸² Altogether there were eight such men who witnessed six or more of Nicholaa's charters.⁸³

By studying the backgrounds of the men who attested Nicholaa's charters reasonably frequently, tracing the basis for their connections with her and comparing the composition of her following with those of other magnates—such as David (1152–1219), earl of Huntingdon, William Marshal (ca. 1146–1219), earl of Pembroke, Roger de Quincy (ca. 1195–1264), earl of Winchester, and Hugh de Lacy (d. 1186) and Walter his son (d. 1241), barons with estates in England, Ireland, Wales, and Normandy—we can determine whether the inner circle of Nicholaa's following differed from or conformed to those of her near contemporaries. The ties that held aristocratic followings together have long been the subject of lively scholarly debate, especially in relation to whether there was a late medieval transition in the nature of social ties from “the tenurial bond between lord and vassal” to “the personal contract between master and man,” or whether multiple connections determined the shape of seigniorial retinues in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, distinguishing them from honorial communities.⁸⁴ Keith Stringer's study of Earl David, for instance, found that thirteen of this lord's inner circle of twenty followers were his tenants, either by inheritance or by grant.⁸⁵ Earl David was, however, generally averse to granting his men lands, and occasionally rewarded them with money-fees instead.⁸⁶ David Crouch, on the other hand, was unable to establish a tenurial or “feudal” link between twelve of the eighteen knights who regularly witnessed William Marshal's charters from 1189 onwards.⁸⁷ Instead, Marshal's retinue had a “geographical bias” to its membership, so that this earl of Pembroke relied upon men with properties in west and

82 This employs Simpson's and Stinger's methodologies: “*Familia* of Roger de Quincy,” 107; Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, 155–58, 163–65.

83 These were: Geoffrey Angevin, Robert Angevin, William de Guînes, William fitzWilliam de Guînes (possibly the son of or the same person as William de Guînes), John of Lincoln, William of Newton, William fitzWilliam of Newton, and Nicholas of Sutton.

84 McFarlane, “Bastard Feudalism,” 23–24. For discussion, see Crouch, Carpenter, and Coss, “Debate: Bastard Feudalism Revised,” 165–203; Carpenter, “Second Century of English Feudalism,” 30–71; Crouch, *The English Aristocracy*, 150–58.

85 Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, 163–64.

86 Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, 163–68.

87 Crouch, *William Marshal*, 232.

southwest England.⁸⁸ Since Marshal acquired most of his estates in England, South Wales, and Ireland through his marriage in 1189 to Isabella de Clare, Strongbow's heiress, rather than through inheriting his brother, John Marshal's more modest honour in 1194, existing tenants of Isabella's family may not have felt so beholden to him. After all, the Anglo-Norman verse *History of William Marshal* recalled the precarity of the ties that bound Marshal's tenants in Ireland to him and his wife. Before Marshal left Ireland in 1207, he presented his pregnant countess to their tenants there, reminding them that Isabella was "your lady by birth, the daughter of the earl who graciously, in his generosity, enfeoffed you all, once he had conquered the land," and urging them to protect her, only for the countess subsequently to face a rebellion and siege.⁸⁹

Later in the thirteenth century, the inner circle of Roger de Quincy's *familia* was twenty-seven persons strong, including fifteen knights, some of whom were kinsmen, "stewards," "administrators," and "landed men in a modest way," while others were probably "landless" individuals who may have received a money-fee; not one was a "major" tenant of Roger's. Overall, Simpson's study found that "tenants of the earl" occupied "only a small place within his *familia*."⁹⁰ Intriguingly, a similar picture has emerged from Colin Veach's analysis of the men who attested Hugh and Walter de Lacy's charters: few of Hugh's existing tenants witnessed this lord's acts, while Walter "recruited indiscriminately from among tenant families of other lords," especially in Herefordshire and south Shropshire, regions to which the Lacys enjoyed strong ties of neighbourhood.⁹¹ With newly conquered lands available to them in Meath in Ireland, however, the Lacys populated these estates with the men whom they recruited into their service.⁹² An analysis of the composition of the inner circle of Nicholaa's following provides a valuable alternative view of a baronial following headed by a female lord.

88 Crouch, *William Marshal*, 233–34.

89 *History of William Marshal*, 2:176–79, ll. 13532–13550; 2:192–93, ll. 13820–13828.

90 Simpson, "Familia of Roger de Quincy," 118, 120–21.

91 Veach, *Lordship in Four Realms*, 258–61.

92 Veach, *Lordship in Four Realms*, 259–60.

Table 5.2. Nicholaa de la Haye's "Inner Circle" of Followers.

(* denotes a possible member of Nicholaa's inner circle of followers.)

Name	Total No. of Attestations	Tenant by Patrimony	Beneficiary of Lands	Office
William of Newton senior and William of Newton junior ⁹³	17	Probably	Yes	Constable (William of Newton senior) Steward (William of Newton junior)
Robert Angevin	11	Probably		
Geoffrey Angevin	10	Probably	Yes	
Nicholas of Sutton	10	Probably	Yes	Serjeant or servant ("serviens")
John of Lincoln	8	Probably	Probably	
William de Guînes (Nicholaa's son-in-law) and William fitzWilliam de Guînes (his son or the same person) ⁹⁴	6 (7)			
Robert Griffin*	5			Steward, Attorney
Jordan of Ashby de la Launde*	4	Probably		Constable, Attorney
Roger of Stixwould*	3	Yes		Former under-sheriff under Gerard de Canville
James de Bakepuz*	2			Constable

As Table 5.2 indicates, Nicholaa's kinsmen did not feature prominently in her extant charter witness lists. Her eldest son, Richard de Canville (d. 1217), did not witness a single extant charter of his mother's and her younger son, Thomas, witnessed just one.⁹⁵ Sir William de Guînes (*alias* "Gingneto," "Ginez," "Ginneto," "Gisneto," "Gynai," "Gynei," and "Gynetto"), who witnessed six of Nicholaa's extant charters, became her son-in-law, when he mar-

93 These two men are grouped together as they are not always easy to distinguish from one another in the witness lists.

94 William fitzWilliam de Guînes witnessed one charter and was either the son of or the same man as William de Guînes.

95 Handlist, no. 7.

ried Matilda, Nicholaa's daughter by her first husband, William fitzErneis.⁹⁶ In 1194, Nicholaa proffered 300 marks in Lincolnshire to the king for the right to marry her daughter from her first marriage to whomsoever she wished.⁹⁷ This was followed, in 1200, by another proffer of sixty marks and a palfrey to guarantee that Matilda would not be compelled to marry and would be free to marry a person of her choosing.⁹⁸ This sixty-mark debt was subsequently accounted for by the sheriff of Kent, and by 1202 it was William de Guînes who was expected to answer to him for the remaining fifty marks and a palfrey of Nicholaa's debt.⁹⁹ William answered for the debt, which steadily reduced, in 1203, 1204, 1205, and 1206; in 1206, it was also noted that Matilda, the daughter and heir of William fitzErneis, was the wife of William de Guînes, and owed £61 from the debts of Aaron of Lincoln for which William was required to answer in Lincolnshire.¹⁰⁰ It is uncertain whether William de Guînes enjoyed a tenurial link with Nicholaa prior to his marriage into her family. In 1166, a man of the same name, perhaps William's father, held three knights' fees from the honour of Clare in Suffolk, while in 1201–1212 and 1211–1212, a William de Guînes was also recorded as a tenant-in-chief, holding one knight's fee in Kent and another as an under-tenant of the Peverel honour in Essex.¹⁰¹

If we consider other, more frequent witnesses of Nicholaa's charters, however, it appears that many of her inner circle of followers belonged to families with tenurial links and histories of service to the La Hayes. Two knights, William of Newton senior and William of Newton junior, his son and namesake, appear in the witness lists of seventeen of Nicholaa's charters, and the family's toponym suggests that they came from Newton, a village in Kesteven in southwest Lincolnshire in which the La Hayes held property.¹⁰²

96 Handlist, nos. 9–10, 15–16, 24, 27. William fitzWilliam de Guînes witnessed no. 25. The tentative identification of this toponym as Guînes in the Pas-de-Calais here is based on *Norman Charters*, ed. Vincent, 234, no. 107.

97 *Pipe Roll*, 6 *Richard I*, 119.

98 *Rotuli de Oblatis*, ed. Hardy, 85. See also *Pipe Roll*, 10 *Richard I*, 63 (another "new oblation" of 100 marks in Lincolnshire by Nicholaa for Matilda's marriage).

99 *Pipe Roll*, 4 *John*, 215.

100 *Pipe Roll*, 5 *John*, 25; *Pipe Roll*, 6 *John*, 214; *Pipe Roll*, 7 *John*, 114; *Pipe Roll*, 8 *John*, 49.

101 *Cartae Baronum*, ed. Stacy, 239–42, no. CCXXIII (no. 27); *Red Book of the Exchequer*, ed. Hall, 1:135 (scutage, 1201–1212); 2:591 (escheated honours, 1211–1212).

102 Handlist, nos. 1 (William of Newton), 6 (William of Newton, "then constable"),

A Reginald of Newton, who was perhaps a kinsman of William of Newton senior, and Alan Pes Canis jointly owed the service of one knight to Richard de la Haye in 1166.¹⁰³ William senior had witnessed Gerard's de Canville's charters and later served as Nicholaa's constable, while William junior served as Nicholaa's seneschal or steward.¹⁰⁴ William senior supported Nicholaa and the crown loyally during the First Barons' War, so that when King John visited Louth on October 4, 1216, the king awarded him seisin of William Scot's former properties in Willoughby.¹⁰⁵ It seems that William of Newton senior acted as the deputy constable of Lincoln castle until 1222–1223. Royal letters patent of May 1222 ordered the king's treasurer and chamberlain to deliver £20 to William of Newton, "constable of Lincoln castle," for Lady Nicholaa's use and support in royal service.¹⁰⁶ Yet, by 1224–1227, James de Bakepuz had succeeded William in office and William of Newton junior was Nicholaa's steward.¹⁰⁷ William of Newton senior also had a house in Sutton.¹⁰⁸ Nicholaa granted his son seven acres and three perches of land there, which William junior later donated to the monks of Castle Acre for the salvation of his own soul and that of Lady Nicholaa.¹⁰⁹ He later sued Idonea de Canville in 1233–1234 for two bovates of land in Sutton and Lutton, which John of Lincoln, witness of eight of Nicholaa's charters,¹¹⁰ had held from William for

7 (William of Newton, "then constable," and William his son), 8 (William of Newton, "constable," and William his son), 9 ("Lord William of Newton, then steward of the aforesaid Lady [Nicholaa]"), 10 (William of Newton, "steward"), 11 (William of Newton, "then steward of Lady N[icholaa]"), 13 (William of Newton), 14 (William of Newton, "then my constable," and William his son), 15 ("Lord William of Newton junior, then my seneschal"), 16 (William of Newton), 20 (William of Newton), 22 (William of Newton, "steward"), 23 (William of Newton, "then constable of the castle of Lincoln"), 24 (William of Newton, "knight, then seneschal"), 25 (William of Newton, "then steward of the time"), 27 (William of Newton).

103 *Cartae Baronum*, ed. Stacy, 225–26, no. CCXI (no. 5).

104 For William witnessing Gerard's charters, see, for instance, BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r.

105 *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. Hardy, 1:290.

106 *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. Hardy, 1:497.

107 Handlist, no. 24. Letters close issued in July 1229 record that another man, Robert de Canville, presumably Gerard's kinsman, had also served as constable of Lincoln castle: *Close Rolls, 1227–1231*, 192.

108 BL, Harley MS 2110, fols. 71v–72r, 72r, 73v.

109 BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 73v.

110 Handlist, nos. 1, 6, 8, 9–11, 15, 22.

the term of his life and which should have reverted to William when John died, in accordance with another grant that Nicholaa had made to William.¹¹¹

Geoffrey Angevin, another member of Nicholaa's inner circle, held property in Lutton, which may have included an acre that he had received from her.¹¹² Another member of his family, Hugh, who was probably his father, had witnessed charters issued by Richard de la Haye and William fitzErneis, while Gerard de Canville had confirmed a gift that he had made to Castle Acre priory of two acres of land.¹¹³ Men named Geoffrey and Robert Angevin witnessed documents issued by Gerard, including one recording a grant made at Nicholaa's "petition,"¹¹⁴ as well as ten and eleven of Nicholaa's charters, respectively.¹¹⁵ Geoffrey had also served as Gerard's attorney in a lawsuit brought by Gerard's sister, Matilda, in 1210, when he was too weak to appear before the royal justices in person.¹¹⁶

Another regular witness of Nicholaa's charters was Nicholas, the serjeant or servant ("serviens") of Sutton, who attested ten documents, and was also probably another tenant of the La Haye family, bearing in mind their estates in that area.¹¹⁷ He was certainly the beneficiary of a grant by Nicholaa of a bovate of land in Sutton.¹¹⁸ The strength of his personal attachment to her as his lord was demonstrated when he gave Barlings abbey ten acres of land in Lutton expressly "for the salvation of the soul of Lady Nicholaa de Haya, my lady."¹¹⁹

Another three men, who witnessed fewer than six charters, also probably belonged to Nicholaa's inner circle of associates. These were Robert Grif-

111 *Curia Regis Rolls of the Reign of Henry III*, 15:80–81, no. 386. For John witnessing Gerard's charters, see, for instance, BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r.

112 Handlist, nos. 3–4, 22.

113 BL, Harley MS 2110, fols. 70v–71r; BL, Harley MS 742, fol. 220r. For a charter issued by Robert fitzHugh Angevin, see BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 75v.

114 BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r; BL, Harley MS 742, fol. 220r. Men named Robert and Geoffrey Angevin appear as father and son in Handlist, nos. 9–11, and as brothers in nos. 8 and 14, so we may be dealing with three men—a Robert, with a brother called Geoffrey and a son called Geoffrey.

115 Handlist, nos. 1, 7–11, 13–16, 22 (Robert witnessed the notification of a grant by Nicholaa to Geoffrey).

116 *Curia Regis Rolls*, vol. 6 (11–14 John), 87.

117 Handlist, nos. 1, 8–11, 13–16, 22. For Nicholas witnessing Gerard's charters, see, for instance, BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r.

118 Handlist, no. 3.

119 BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 42v.

fin, who witnessed five charters, served as her steward, and was entrusted to be her attorney in 1218;¹²⁰ Jordan of Ashby de la Launde, who witnessed four charters, received the rebel Adam de Isny's lands from King John on October 1, 1216, and was selected by Nicholaa as a potential attorney in 1218;¹²¹ and James de Bakepuz, who witnessed two charters and served as her constable in ca. 1224–1227.¹²² Although the basis for Nicholaa's connection with Griffin and Bakepuz remains unclear, Jordan of Ashby came from a family that had an established association with the La Hayes.¹²³ A man of the same name, perhaps a father or close relation, was listed as an under-tenant in the 1166 *Carta* of Richard de la Haye.¹²⁴ In 1212, Jordan of Ashby held half a knight's fee in Marston and Dry Doddington in Lincolnshire from Gerard de Canville, presumably from Nicholaa's inheritance.¹²⁵ By 1224–1226, Jordan of Ashby was constable of Lincoln castle (presumably under Nicholaa), discussing its garrisoning with Ralph de Neville, bishop of Chichester, and overseeing building works and repairs there.¹²⁶ A man of the same name was a tenant of the honour of La Haye in 1242–1243, holding property in Ashby and Marston.¹²⁷

Less clear, however, is Sir Roger of Stixwold's status, as the witness of three charters, in Nicholaa's following.¹²⁸ Roger was another La Haye tenant, like Jordan of Ashby. A Roger of Stixwold held one knight's fee from Richard de la Haye in 1166, and in 1212 one carucate in Stixwold and a third of a knight's fee in Silk Willoughby, both from the honour of La Haye, then in Gerard de Canville's hands.¹²⁹ Roger witnessed Gerard's charters

120 Handlist, nos. 6, 7–8 (where he is described as Nicholaa's steward), 13–14; *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre*, ed. Stenton, 197, no. 423, 217, no. 467. For Robert witnessing Gerard's charters, see, for instance, BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r.

121 Handlist, nos. 7–8, 14–15; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. Hardy, 1:290; *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre*, ed. Stenton, 217, no. 467.

122 Handlist, nos. 9, 24 (where he is described as "constable").

123 Robert Griffin was a tenant of the Mowbray honour, who held a carucate in Fridaythorpe, Yorkshire: *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 2:1461 (1224–1230).

124 *Cartae Baronum*, ed. Stacy, 225–26, no. CCXI (no. 7).

125 *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:186 (1212 survey).

126 TNA, SC 1/6/57; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. Hardy, 2:68b; *Pipe Roll*, 10 Henry III, 61.

127 *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 2:1024, 1040, 1073 (1242–1243 survey).

128 Handlist, nos. 8, 14–15 (in no. 15, "Lord Roger of Stixwold").

129 *Cartae Baronum*, ed. Stacy, 225–26, no. CCXI (no. 2); *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:169, 179 (1212 survey). Perhaps it was the Roger in the 1212 survey who served

and served as Gerard's undersheriff, rendering the accounts for Lincolnshire at the Exchequer on Gerard's behalf at Michaelmas 1190, 1191, 1192, and 1204.¹³⁰ A man of the same name was rewarded for his loyalty by King John on October 4, 1216 with a grant of the rebel Osbert of Boothby's lands.¹³¹ Yet, he may not have been as closely associated with Nicholaa as he had been with Gerard.

Overall, the inner circle of Nicholaa's following, more so than that of Earl David, was composed predominantly of men who were existing tenants or who held land by grant from her, as well as a few who were attracted into her service. As a female baron, she was able and ready to reward the men who served her with parcels of the new lands of Elloe, while her patronage of religious houses like Castle Acre priory provided her followers with a valuable spiritual focus for their loyalty to their lady, which they expressed with "pro anima" donations of their own. Interestingly, Nicholaa's use of these new lands to reward her followers mirrored, albeit in a different political and tenurial context, Hugh and Walter de Lacys' use of their new Irish territories in Meath to reward and attract men into their service.¹³² The prevalence of men who held lands from Nicholaa in her inner circle was, perhaps, only to be expected in her case in view of the La Hayes' long-standing regional dominance in Lincolnshire and their continuity of service as tenants-in-chief and officeholders to the English crown. Strikingly, six of the men who later formed Nicholaa's inner circle of followers (William of Newton senior, Robert Griffin, John of Lincoln, Nicholas the serjeant, and Geoffrey and Robert Angevin) had attested as a group a single charter issued by Nicholaa's late husband, Gerard de Canville, suggesting that the men who served Gerard (and presumably Nicholaa) before his death readily continued to support Nicholaa in widowhood.¹³³ While other late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century lords may have been struggling with the erosion of their English patrimonies after a century or so of generous religious endowments (unless, for example, they had acquired new lands by conquest, as in Ireland), the process of land-reclamation in South Lincolnshire provided Nicholaa and

Nicholaa. He also held property in Silk Willoughby from Gilbert de Gant: *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:179.

130 For Roger as a witness, see BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r. For Roger as undersheriff, see *Pipe Roll, 2 Richard I*, 76; *Pipe Roll, 3 & 4 Richard I*, 2 (1191), 231 (1192); *Pipe Roll, 6 John*, 62.

131 *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. Hardy, 2:290.

132 Veach, *Lordship in Four Realms*, 259–60.

133 BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 71r.

her kin with new lands with which to reward followers and to support religious communities.

The way in which Nicholaa rewarded the men who served her with lands looked back to the “feudal” world of lord–vassal relationships, but the fact that she was occasionally able to recruit other lords’ tenants into her service undoubtedly stands as testimony to her talents, status, and reputation as a local baron in Lincolnshire. She was clearly selective in her choice of men. After all, many La Haye tenants who were listed in a 1212 survey of tenants-in-chief witnessed none of Nicholaa’s extant charters. This was the case, for instance, with William fitzPeter, a tenant in Minting, Richard of Billingborough, who held a knight’s fee in Billingborough and properties in Thorpe, and Robert of Pickworth, who held one and a half knights’ fees in Pickworth.¹³⁴ Nicholaa’s sex did not inhibit her ability to recruit her followers from within and beyond the tenurial borders of her honour, reinforcing the impression that she was an authoritative figure in the East Midlands and, as such, suitable for government office. Nor, strikingly, did Nicholaa’s sex necessarily deter her adherents from choosing to serve her in an era when multiple lordship, in the sense of holding lands from or owing fealty to more than one lord, was fairly common in the Midlands.¹³⁵

Conclusion

By 1215, Nicholaa de la Haye was the widowed heiress of the barony of Brattleby, who had held and exercised the office of constable alongside her second husband Gerard de Canville for around thirty years. During her second marriage, she had played an active role in the co-lordship of the family estates, managing her patrimony, and encouraging her husband in his acquisition of new lands in Sutton and Lutton. In widowhood, the language employed in her charters, letters, and seal legend continued to celebrate and advertise her natal family’s connections and her standing as the eldest daughter and co-heiress of Richard de la Haye. Overall, Nicholaa’s self-representation in the documents that she issued, and the activities in which she engaged to consolidate her estates, demonstrate how female baronial power was a fundamental feature of aristocratic life. Her identity as the member of the La Haye family who retained and apparently chose her natal family’s English honour and office over the lands of her Norman ancestors provided

134 *Liber Feodorum*, ed. Lyte, 1:170, 180, 186 (1212 survey).

135 Boston, “Multiple Lordship,” 174–202.

the essential prop to her local power and authority in Lincolnshire. In view of Nicholaa's lineage, credentials, and personal abilities, it is no surprise that her sex proved no barrier to her maintaining and rewarding a following of local men who assisted her in fulfilling her seigneurial responsibilities and office. Nicholaa successfully courted old and new La Haye tenants, as well as neighbouring landholders, enabling her to construct a stable following whose members served their mistress faithfully into old age. Her ability to do this provides a timely reminder of how ladies of baronial status were integral to the structures, mechanisms, and dynamics of regional lordship; hence their ready adoption of the norms, forms, and visual markers of baronial authority and status in their charters and letters. Baronial women controlled lands and men, just as their male counterparts did, since the core components of baronial power were based more in class than sex.

Handlist

Like many of the deeds issued by her contemporaries, none of the documents issued in Nicholaa's name were dated or recorded their place of issue.¹³⁶ We are therefore reliant upon internal evidence to narrow down the context in which they were produced. It is for this reason, and to preserve the integrity of the archival context in which the texts of Nicholaa's charters and letters survive, that the English summaries of her Latin charters and letters presented here are arranged by archive and in the order in which they were originally transcribed into cartularies (when no original survives). Each charter or letter text has been assigned a probable date of issue in square brackets and provided with a note on provenance. When an original charter or letter has been located, it is cited as "A =" followed by the manuscript reference. Later copies are cited as "B =", "C =", and so on, in order of date. In compiling this handlist, recourse has only been made to post-medieval copies when no earlier text has been located. For ease of reference, first names of people have been rendered in their modern form and toponyms and occupational surnames of people mentioned in the charters have been identified as far as possible or standardized to their most common form.

136 For other examples, see Chibnall, "Dating the Charters," 51–59.

A. Charters and Letters issued by Nicholaa de la Haye, concerning Property, Goods, and Rights.

Duchy of Lancaster Archive

I. Simon fitzWilliam

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood, of her grant to Simon fitzWilliam of eight acres of land formerly held by Peter fitzAlberge, in return for his homage and service and for an annual rent of 5s. 4d. Witnesses: William of Newton, John of Lincoln, William of Ingleby, Geoffrey Angevin, Nicholas of Sutton, Robert Angevin, Robert fitzWilliam, Thomas fitzSimon, William fitzSimon, Richard Franchum, Simon the clerk, and others. [1215 × 1230]

A = TNA, DL 25/2890. s. xiii. Parchment. Size: approx. 93mm × 190mm.¹³⁷ Sealed on a parchment tag *sur double queue*, with the tag measuring 125mm × 11mm. Seal impression on uncoloured wax, varnished; an oval portrait showing a woman standing and facing half towards her left, with long, unbound hair, wearing a belted gown and mantle, with her right hand on her hip and holding a bird in her left hand. Seal legend damaged: “[.] SIGILL’ NICOLAE [D]E [HAI]A [FILI] A[E] R[ICARDI] [D]E [H]A[IA].” Seal size: 64mm × 38 mm. Counterseal: Oval. A gem showing a figure walking to the left and holding an object shaped like a sword in their right hand. Counterseal legend: “[...] ILLV[.][.]?D?C?A?V?S[.]”¹³⁸ Size: 18mm × 13 mm. **B** = TNA, DL 42/2 (The Great Cowcher Book of the Duchy of Lancaster), fol. 384v. s. xiii–xiv. Photograph of A in Dryburgh, *Royal Seals*, 127.

137 Paul Dryburgh measured the charter, seal, and counterseal. Please note that Duchy copyright material in TNA is the property of His Majesty The King in Right of His Duchy of Lancaster and is reproduced by permission of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster.

138 The seal legend and the description of the counterseal have been taken here from a former Public Record Office search room paper catalogue of seals dated March 15, 1996.

Barlings Abbey Cartulary

2. Henry de Johannisville

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her legitimate widowhood, of her grant to Henry de Johannisville of sixty-six acres of land “within the conquest” of Sutton (Sutton in Holland), in return for his homage and service and for an annual rent of a pound of pepper. No witnesses. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Cotton MS Faustina B. I (Barlings abbey cartulary), fol. 42r. *temp.* Edw. I. Nicholaa’s charter is followed by another deed, whereby Henry de Johannisville granted to Barlings abbey the sixty-six acres of land which he had by Nicholaa’s gift.¹³⁹ Henry de Johannisville had witnessed a notification of a grant issued by Gerard de Canville, at the request of Nicholaa his wife, whereby he granted his men customary rights.¹⁴⁰ Referenced in a royal charter of Henry III issued on January 27, 1227, in *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, 1:88.

3. Nicholas, serjeant or servant (“serviens”) of Sutton

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood, of her grant to Nicholas, serjeant (“servienti”) of Sutton, of one bovate of land in Sutton, namely that which Guy the clerk held, except for eight acres lying in “Langelond” for which she gave him ten acres “in the new conquest of the marsh of Lutton,” lying near the land of Geoffrey Angevin, in return for his homage and service and for an annual rent of a pound of wax (“unam petram cere”). No witnesses. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Cotton MS Faustina B. I (Barlings abbey cartulary), fol. 42r–v. *temp.* Edw. I. Nicholaa’s charter is followed by the notification of a grant to the church of the Blessed Mary of Barlings and its Premonstratensian canons of ten acres of land in the new conquest of Lutton by Nicholas of Sutton “for the salvation of the soul of Lady Nicholaa de la Haye, my lady,” as well as for his own soul and that of Agnes his wife.

139 BL, Cotton MS Faustina B. I, fol. 42r.

140 BL, Harleian MS 742, fol. 220r; Hallam, *Settlement and Society*, 226 (Appendix 1, no. 8).

4. Barlings Abbey

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood, of her confirmation of the gift made by Nicholas of Sutton, formerly her serjeant ("serviens"), to the church of the Blessed Mary of Barlings and the canons there, of ten acres of land in the new conquest of Lutton in Holland, between the land which the said canons had by Henry de Johannisville's gift and the land of Geoffrey Angevin, in free, pure, and perpetual alms. No witnesses. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Cotton MS Faustina B. I (Barlings abbey cartulary), fol. 42v. *temp.* Edw. I.

5. Barlings Abbey [styled here "the church of the Blessed Mary of Oxney"]

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, daughter of Richard de la Haye ("filia Ricardi de Haya"), in her free widowhood, to the church of the Blessed Mary of Oxney [in Barlings] and the canons there, of her confirmation of all the lands, tenements, possessions, and liberties that they have by the gift of her uncle, Ralph de la Haye, and her father, Richard de la Haye, namely the island called Oxney [in Barlings] and the vill of Barlings, and a carucate of land by the gift of Hugh Bardolf in the territory of Riseholme, with pasture for fifty sheep and a bovat of land by the gift of Adam Paynel in the same territory and of all the land in Scothern, with the advowson of the church there, by the gift of Robert Bardolf, and of two bovates of land in Sudbrook by the gift of William fitzAlexander de Bych' and grant of William Syre of Sudbrook and the land which Henry de Johannisville gave them within the new conquest of Sutton and Lutton in Holland, and all lands and liberties which they have of Nicholaa's fee of her gift and grant and of those of her antecessors in Lincolnshire, in free, pure, and perpetual alms. No witnesses. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Cotton MS Faustina B. I (Barlings abbey cartulary), fol. 42v. *temp.* Edw. I. See also no. 30 below.

Blanchelande Abbey, Coutances Diocese, Normandy, Transcriptions of Grants

6. Blanchelande Abbey

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, daughter of Richard de la Haye (“filia Ricardi de Haya”), in her free widowhood and established power (“potestate mea constituta”), that she has confirmed to the abbey of St Nicholas of Blanchelande and the canons there, the vill of Cammeringham, which her father Richard de la Haye and her mother gave them in pure and perpetual alms. Witnesses: Robert Griffin, then seneschal, William of Newton, then constable, Robert de Bakepuz, Ralph de Marchemedlee, knights, Robert de Canville, John of Lincoln, John of Ashby, John of Claxby, Robert of Aisthorpe, Roger of Claxby, Alan of Elkington, Gilbert of Crowland, Alan the porter (“janitore”), Eustace the cook, and Walter de Canville. [1215 × 1230]

A = AD Manche, H 182 (destroyed 1944), for which see *Inventaire-Sommaire. Manche. Série H, 1er Livraison*, 28–29; *Letters and Charters of Henry II*, nos. 242–43. B = TNA, E 132/3/36 (Transcription of grants to the abbey of St Nicholas, Blanchelande, 10 Edward III, 1336–1337). Note: The transcription of this charter is followed by a notification of the earlier grant made by Nicholaa’s father Richard and Matilda his wife, concerning their joint gift of the vill of Cammeringham to the abbey of St Nicholas. There is an *inspeximus* of Edward II of these Blanchelande acts, issued at York on September 10, 1317, in TNA, C 53/104, m. 13, which is printed in summary form in *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, 3:362–63. There is a copy of this *inspeximus* by Charles de Gerville (made in 1836 from A) in Caen, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Coll. Mancel 299, 1625–28 at 1626–27, and a copy of the latter by Auguste Serville (1892) in Flers, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 15, Suppl., fols. 15r–22r at fols. 17r–19r.¹⁴¹

Castle Acre Priory Cartulary

7. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, established in her widowhood (“constituta in viduitate mea”) and her free and full power, of her confirmation to the church of the Blessed Mary of Acre and the monks there, for her soul and the souls of her antecessors and husbands, of

¹⁴¹ Daniel Power provided these references.

all the gifts in churches, advowsons of churches, and tithes made to them by Robert her grandfather, Richard her father, and Ralph her uncle, and of all the gifts made by William fitzErneis and Gerard de Canville, her husbands, in lands, exchanges of lands, in moors, and in marshes. Witnesses: Thomas de Canville, Nicholaa's son ("filio meo"), Oliver Deyncourt, Roberto Griffin, then Nicholaa's seneschal, Jordan of Ashby, William of Newton, then constable, William his son, Master Hugh de Bereford, Matthew the chaplain, Geoffrey Angevin, Robert Angevin, the whole soke of Sutton, and many others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 71r. s. xiii. Printed from B in Caley, Ellis, and Bandinel, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 5:53, no. xvii.

8. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and full power, of her confirmation to the church of the Blessed Mary of Acre and the monks there, of five acres of land in Sutton at "Brictmeres Hirne," which Simon, her former serjeant ("serviens") at Sutton, gave to the said monks for the salvation of his soul, to hold by hereditary right, along with the charters relating to this land, in pure and perpetual alms. Witnesses: Robert Griffin, then steward, Jordan of Ashby, Roger of Stixwould, William of Newton, constable, William his son, John of Lincoln, Robert Angevin, Geoffrey his brother, Robert of Aisthorpe, serjeant ("serviente") of Sutton, Nicholas the serjeant ("serviente"), and many others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 71v. s. xiii.

9. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and established power, of her grant to the church of the Blessed Mary of Castle Acre ("Castellacra") and the monks there, of twenty-six acres of land in the vill of Sutton which Henry de Pereres held from her, twenty acres of which lie in the new conquest of the marsh between the land of the aforesaid prior and convent of Castle Acre and the land of Peter the reeve, and abutting to the east on the street which is called Old Fendyke ("Holdefendig"), and six acres of land lying beyond the Old Fendyke ("Le Holfendig") on the opposite side of the twenty acres, in free, pure, and perpetual alms. Nicholaa has granted to the church of

St Mary, in free, pure, and perpetual alms, 4s. and one pound of cinnamon in annual rent which Henry was accustomed to render to her for the twenty-six acres. Witnesses: Lord William of Newton, then steward of the aforesaid lady, Nicholas the serjeant ("serviente"), William de Guînes, Henry Sturmin, James de Bakepuz, Robert Angevin, Geoffrey his son, William de Reperwic, Richard Franchum, William de Haringshal', Nicholas, chamberlain of the prior, John, marshal of the prior, Richard Foliot, Walter Tusard', John of Lincoln, Thomas fitz-Simon, William fitzSimon, and others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 71v. s. xiii.

10. Henry de Pereres

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and legitimate power, of her grant to Henry de Pereres of twenty acres of land "in the new conquest of the marsh" of Sutton, lying between her land there and the land of Peter fitzJocelin, in return for his homage and service and an annual rent of 4s. and one pound of cinnamon. Witnesses: Lord William de Guînes, William of Newton, steward, Gilbert of Faversham, John of Lincoln, Jocelin of Bakepuz, John of Ashby, John of Claxby, William of Ingleby, Jordan of Tydd, Nicholas of Sutton, Robert Angevin, Geoffrey Angevin his son, Richard Franchum, and many others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fols. 71v–72r. s. xiii. Note: The notification mentions William of Newton's house in Sutton.

11. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, daughter and heir of Richard de la Haye, established in her free widowhood, of her grant to the church of the Blessed Mary of Castle Acre and the monks there, of six acres of land, lying between "Balingsdrave" and the land of Henry de Pereres, in free, pure, and perpetual alms. Witnesses: William of Newton, "then steward of Lady Nicholaa," Nicholas the serjeant ("serviente"), John of Lincoln, Robert Angevin, Geoffrey his son, Simon fitzGeva, Jurd' [sic] de Ros, Robert his son, John de Bakepuz, Henry de Sturmin, John the marshal, Robert de Rodele, William de Haringh', William reeve of the monks, and others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 72r. s. xiii. Note: The notification mentions William of Newton's house.

12. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and proper (“propria”) power, of her grant to the church of Blessed Mary of Castle Acre and the monks there, of three acres of land in the vill of Sutton and Lutton which Robert the chaplain held from her, in pure and perpetual alms, two acres and one rood of which lies between the land of Geoffrey fitzKinne to the south and the land of Eudo Bene to the north. Three roods of the land lie in Lutton between the ditch which is called “Blackesdic” to the east and the land of Solomon fitzWilliam to the west. Witnesses: Alan of Moulton, Lambert of Whaplode, Geoffrey d’Oyry, Herbert le Blund, Reginald the cook, Hugh de Ros, Reginald de Ty[...], Laurence of Holbeach, Jordan de Ros, Richard de Franchum, William de Recherwic’, and many others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 72r. s. xiii.

13. Church of St Mary of Sutton

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her legitimate widowhood and free power, of her grant to the church of the Blessed Mary in Sutton (Sutton in Holland), of three and a half acres from her inheritance there, which lie near the ditch of the marsh of “Brictm’eshirne,” with free common in the same vill, in free, pure, and perpetual alms. Simon fitzRalph fitzAmaury, Nicholaa’s serjeant (“serviens”) of Sutton (Sutton in Holland), and his heirs or assigns, will hold all the land from the church, rendering 6d. each year at the feast of St Botulph (June 17) for the oil of a silver lamp before the cross in the church. Witnesses: William of Newton, William de Chaures, Henry de Johannisville, Ralph de Marchemedlee, Robert Griffin, William, Torsten, chaplain of Sutton, Ralph de Broil, Nicholas of Sutton, Geoffrey Angevin, Robert Angevin, Nicholas fitzSimon, and Simon the clerk. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 72r–v. s. xiii.

14. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and power, of her grant to the church of the Blessed Mary of Acre and the monks there, of one acre of land in Sutton (Sutton in Holland), which Thomas the steward (“dispensator”) held from her in the same vill where Thomas’s house is situated, for the service of half a pound of pep-

per each year. Nicholaa made this grant in pure, free, and perpetual alms. Witnesses: Robert Griffin, then Nicholaa's seneschal, William of Newton, then her constable, William his son, Jordan of Ashby de la Launde, Roger of Stixwould, John de Huc' [*sic*], Geoffrey Angevin, Robert Angevin his brother, Robert of Aisthorpe, Nicholas the serjeant ("serviente"), and others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 72v. s. xiii.

15. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and power, of her grant to the church of the Blessed Mary of Acre and the monks there, of Walter fitzGuy of Lutton and his sons and daughters and their issue, with his messuage and the acre of land on which it is situated, by the chapel of Lutton on the west, with all service which Walter and his predecessors performed for Nicholaa and her predecessors. Nicholaa also grants to the monks that Walter and his heirs shall have free common in the vill of Sutton and Lutton, just as Walter and his predecessors were and are accustomed to have. Witnesses: Lord William of Newton, junior, then Nicholaa's seneschal, Jordan of Ashby de la Launde, Lord Roger of Stixwould, Henry de Pereres, William de Guînes, John of Ashby de la Launde, Nicholas the serjeant ("serviente") of Sutton, Geoffrey Angevin, John of Lincoln, Robert Angevin, Adam fitzRoger, Geoffrey, the prior's chamberlain, Alexander, the steward ("dapifero") of the prior and the monks, and Anketill the porter. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 72v. s. xiii.

16. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and her proper ("propria") power, to the church of the Blessed Mary of Castle Acre and the prior and convent there, of her grant of Simon Falkes and the whole vill, free from all forms of servitude ("servitude") that he owed to Nicholaa, in pure and perpetual alms. Witnesses: William of Newton, Nicholas of Sutton, Robert Angevin, William de Guînes, Henry Sturmin, Richard de Foliot, Richard de Franchu[...], William de Reperwic', Geoffrey Angevin, Thomas fitzSimon, William fitzSimon, William fitzAdam, and others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 72v. s. xiii.

17. Castle Acre Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, concerning the disturbance (“commotio”) which was between her and the prior of Castle Acre, whereby Nicholaa orders that the prior and monks shall have the tenements which are of the alms of her antecessors in the vill of Sutton, peacefully and quietly, just as they were accustomed to have them in the time of her antecessors. No witnesses. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 2110 (Castle Acre priory cartulary), fol. 73r. s. xiii.

Combe Abbey Cartulary

18. Combe Abbey

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, of her gift to the house of Combe and the monks there, of 100 shillings of silver from the goods of Gerard de Canville, formerly her husband, for his soul, for the purpose of observing Gerard’s anniversary on December 22 each year in perpetuity, according to the tenor of the charter written below [in the cartulary]. No witnesses. [?1215]

B = BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A. I (Combe abbey cartulary), fol. 35r. 1255. The gift to Combe abbey is followed by another in the cartulary on the same folio, whereby Michael, abbot of Combe, acknowledged the receipt of this gift, and put in place arrangements for Gerard’s commemoration.

19. Combe Abbey

Letters sent by Nicholaa de la Haye to the abbot and convent of Combe, concerning Gerard’s anniversary. No witnesses. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A. I (Combe abbey cartulary), fol. 35r. 1255.

Haverholme Priory Cartulary

20. Haverholme Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her widowhood, of her confirmation of Jollan of Healing's gifts in the territory of Hougham, of her fee, to the convent of the blessed Mary of Haverholme, in pure and perpetual alms. Witness: William of Newton. [1215 × 1230; probably *temp.* King John, 1215–1216]

C = BL, Lansdowne MS 207A, fol. 118v. 1639. Extracts from the lost cartulary of Haverholme, once in the possession of Edmund Lynold, rector of Healing, compiled by Gervase Holles of Grimsby in 1638–1639. Printed from C in “Haverholme Priory Charters,” *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries* 17 (1922–23), 44, no. 139.

21. Haverholme Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, of her confirmation to the nuns of Haverholme of “other gifts of her fee and four bovates of land” in Ashby de la Laund which Jordan of Ashby sold to Roger, nephew of Wigot, chancellor of Lincoln cathedral. Witnesses: Philip of Kyme, Richard Kahames, and William de la Laund. [1215 × 1230; *temp.* King John]

C = BL, Lansdowne MS 207A, fol. 118v. 1639. Extracts from the lost cartulary of Haverholme, once in the possession of Edmund Lynold, rector of Healing, compiled by Gervase Holles of Grimsby in 1638–1639. Printed from C in “Haverholme Priory Charters,” *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries* 17 (1922–23), 44, no. 140.

Lansdowne Manuscript

22. Geoffrey Angevin

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood and power, of her grant to Geoffrey Angevin, of one acre of land next to Geoffrey's land before the gate of John fitzAdam, in return for his homage and service. Witnesses: William of Newton, steward, Nicholas of Sutton, Robert Angevin, John of Lincoln, and others. [1215 × 1230]¹⁴²

142 Hugh Doherty provided the reference to this document.

B = BL, Lansdowne MS 863, fol. 77r (a post-medieval copy of a missing single-sheet original charter). s. xvii–xviii. Note accompanying this transcription: “this dede is in the custody of Robert Pakenham of totyng in the counti of Surrey.” Seal: A crude pen drawing of an oval portrait seal impression, showing a woman standing and facing half towards her left, with long, unbound hair; wearing a belted gown and mantle, with her right hand on her hip and holding a bird in her left hand. Seal legend: “SIGILLVM NICHOLA[sic] FILIA[sic] RICARDI DE HAIA.”

Lincoln Cathedral, Dean and Chapter’s Archives

23. Peter the Woad-Seller

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her widowhood and full power, of her grant to Peter the Woad-Seller of all her land with houses in the parish of St Michael in Lincoln, lying between the land formerly of Moses son of Benedict, Jew of Lincoln, to the south, and the gate of the Bail of Lincoln to the north. Witnesses: Oliver Deyncourt, William of Newton, then constable of Lincoln castle, Peter of the Bridge (“de Ponte”), then mayor of Lincoln, Peter of the Bail (“de Ballio”), Ralph fitzLewin, John de Paris and Peter de Paris his brother, Giles fitzOsbert, Fulk fitzRembald, Robert fitzYwan, then reeve (“prepositis”) of Lincoln, William de Paris, Robert fitzJordan, John the clerk, and many others. [ca. 1221]

A = Lincolnshire Archives, D&C, Dij/76/2/22, attached by a parchment twist with a knot at each end to Dij/76/2/19–21. Parchment. Size: approx. 187.5mm × 106mm. Endorsements: (1) “De tenemento quodam jacente inter portas Ballii et civitatos supra montem extra novem murum versus occidentem et versus castrum in parochia Sancti Michaelis.” s. xiii–xiv; (2) “Hec carta exhibita fuit Johanni de Esseb’, tunc senescallo comitis, presentibus Willelmo de Neovilla, constabulario, et G. de Brotelb’, serviente tunc, in parochia Sancti Clementis in plena curia die Martis post clausum Pasche anno et cetera xliij propter demandam j denarii contra hanc cartam et per considerationem curie posita est in respeccione bonorum sine cohercione facienda.” s. xiii; (3) “Carta domine Nicholae de Haya facta Petro le Weyd’ in Lincoll’” s. xiii; (4) “Linc.” s. xiii. Sealed on a parchment tag *sur double queue*, but seal now lost. **B** = Lincolnshire Archives, D&C, A/1/6, fol. 123r, no. 839 (The *Registrum* of Lincoln cathedral). ca. 1350. Printed from A in *Registrum Antiquissimum*, ed. Major, 8:107–08, no. 2297,

where it is dated, based on the appearance among the witnesses of Peter of the Bridge, mayor of Lincoln, and a list of bailiffs who probably held office in 1221.

24. Lincoln Cathedral

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood, of her grant to the mother church of the blessed Mary of Lincoln and William the dean, of the land which Robert Lictfot' at some time held in the Bail of Lincoln, within the door of Eastgate, between the said door and the dean's house, for enlarging the dean's court, in pure and perpetual alms. Witnesses: Roger of Bristol, Peter de Keuermund, canons of Lincoln, William of Newton, knight, then seneschal, James de Bakepuz, then constable, William fitzWilliam of Ingleby, John of Claxby, William de Guînes, Peter of the Bail, then mayor of Lincoln, Elias de Roxby, Maurice of Newport, William of London, William of Aylesbury, clerks, Henry de Pereres, Guy of the Bail, Robert Schort, and John Sess. [1224 × 1227]

A = Lincolnshire Archives, D&C, Dij/81/2/33.¹⁴³ Parchment. Size: approx. 150mm × 112.5mm. Endorsements: (1) "+." s. xiii.; (2) "Linc' in parrochia Omnium Sanctorum in Ballio." s. xiii. Seal: Broken seal fragment in red wax, attached by red, white, and green cords and sealed *sur double queue*. Seal impression: part of an oval portrait seal, showing a standing woman facing left with a bird, possibly a falcon, on her left wrist. Size of seal: approx. 50 × 37.5 mm. Seal legend damaged: [...]ILL' NICOL[.....]. Counterseal: Damaged, but probably round like no. 1 above. Size of counterseal: approx. 18mm. in diameter. Counterseal legend: [.....] NICHOL. **B** = D&C, A/1/6, fol. 95r, no. 598 (The *Registrum* of Lincoln cathedral). ca. 1350. Printed from A in *Registrum Antiquissimum*, ed. Major, 10: 258–59, no. 2923, where it is dated in accordance with the appearance among the witnesses of Peter of the Bail, who was mayor of Lincoln in 1224–1227. Photograph in Taylor, *Lincoln Cathedral Library*, 9.

143 Because this charter is on public display, I have relied upon Miss Kathleen Major's measurements and her description of the endorsements and counterseal here.

25. The Fabric of Lincoln Cathedral

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, in her free widowhood, of her grant to the fabric of the mother church of the Blessed Mary of Lincoln, of all the area from the ancient entrance of the cathedral cemetery up to the houses which were formerly of Master Alexander of Elstow, archdeacon of Bedford, in free, pure, and perpetual alms. Witnesses: William of Newton, then steward ("tunc temporis senescall"), Henry de Pereres, William fitzWilliam de Guînes, Bertram de Giney, John of Ashby, William of Ingleby, John of Claxby, Thomas of Lincoln, Guy of the Bail, John Sesse, William of Newark, Peter the marshal, Hugh the carpenter, John of Riseholme, and others. [June 2018 × November 1230; probably ca. 1225]

A = Lincolnshire Archives, D&C, Dij/81/1/39. Parchment. Size: 15.5cm × 10.9cm. Endorsed in Latin: "Domina Nicholaa de Haya." s. xiii–xiv. Also endorsed in a modern hand in English: "Lincoln / fabric." Dij/81/1/39 is attached by a parchment twist with a knot at each end to Dij/81/1/38, the bottom portion of a chirograph, recording a notification by R., dean, and the chapter of Lincoln that they have granted to Alexander the Spicer and his heirs, a shop lying between the west gate of the cathedral and the shop formerly of William de Dep on the other side, which is endorsed "in the bail." Sealed on a parchment tag *sur double queue*, but tag and seal now lost. Printed from A in *Registrum Antiquissimum*, ed. Major, 10: 267–68, no. 2931.

Newhouse Abbey Cartulary

26. Newhouse Abbey

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye, daughter of Richard de la Haye, in her free power and widowhood, to the church of St Martial of Newhouse and the canons there, of her confirmation of the gift of all the land that Richard fitzHumphrey of Ulceby and Nigel his brother gave to them from her fee, according to the contents of the charter which the canons have concerning this land. Nicholaa made this grant and confirmation to the canons in free, pure, and perpetual alms. No witnesses. [1215 × 1230]¹⁴⁴

144 Mark Gardiner discovered this text.

B = Lincolnshire Archives, Yarb/3/3/1/1, fol. 13r, no. 119 (Newhouse abbey cartulary).¹⁴⁵ *temp.* Edward I.

Spalding Priory Cartulary

27. Spalding Priory

Notification by Nicholaa de la Haye of her confirmation to the church of the Blessed Mary and the Blessed Nicholas of Spalding, and the monks there, of all the homage and service of Peter fitzElstan and Agnes his wife, owed to her from the tenement that they held from her in Sutton, with all appurtenances pertaining to the homage and service or to the fee, namely an annual payment of 4s. 5d., to hold in free, pure, and perpetual alms. Witnesses: William of Newton, Lambert of Whaplode, William de Guînes, and others. [1215 × 1230]

B = BL, Harley MS 742 (Spalding priory cartulary), fol. 219r-v. ca. 1331.

Lost Charters

28. William of Newton (probably the younger William)

Grant¹⁴⁶ by Nicholaa de la Haye to William of Newton of two bovates of land, with appurtenances, in Sutton and Lutton, which John of Lincoln holds for his life, with reversion to William. [1215 × 1230]

Mentioned in a lawsuit in *Curia Regis Rolls of the Reign of Henry III*, 15:80–81, no. 386 (Michaelmas Term, 17–18 Henry III).

29. William of Newton (probably the younger William)

Grant by Nicholaa de la Haye to William of Newton of seven acres and three perches of land in Sutton, which William later gave to the church of St Mary of Castle Acre and the monks serving God there. [1215 × 1230]

145 Modern foliation and numbering.

146 Since we do not know the precise wording of these documents, lost charters are referred to as “grants” here.

Mentioned in BL, Harley MS 2110, fol. 73v, in a notification issued by William of Newton, knight, of his gift to Castle Acre priory.

30. Barlings Abbey

Grant by Nicholaa de la Haye to Barlings abbey of the park of Barlings, with a meadow, and the service of one knight from the land of Scothern, which Robert Bardolf held from her. [1215 × 1230]

Printed in summary in a royal charter of confirmation to Barlings abbey in *Calendar of the Charter Rolls*, 1:88.

31. Oliver Deyncourt

Grant by Nicholaa de la Haye to Oliver Deyncourt, with Nicholaa her granddaughter or niece, in *maritagium*, of the manor of Duddington in Northamptonshire, in return for an annual rent of a sore sparrowhawk. [1217, May, × 1230]

Referenced in litigation in 1231 and 1254 and in an inquisition of 1293: *Curia Regis Rolls of the Reign of Henry III*, 14:242–43, no. 1155; *Placitorum in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi*, ed. Illingworth, 139b; TNA, C 145/53/24/1–3; *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, 460–61, no. 1644. Note: There may also have been a second charter issued by Nicholaa in connection with this grant. According to later records, Oliver also persuaded Nicholaa to grant him £15 a year in rent of her own by charter in case the king took Duddington into his own hands. For discussion, see *Thurgarton Cartulary*, ed. Foulds, lxxxviii–lxxxix.

B. Letters Patent issued by Nicholaa as Castellan.

Lincoln Cathedral, Dean and Chapter

32. Lincoln Cathedral

Letters patent issued jointly by Nicholaa de la Haye, castellan of Lincoln (“castellana Linc’”), and Geoffrey de Serland, notifying all King Henry III’s faithful subjects that they have taken the church of Lincoln, with all its appurtenances, the dean, canons, clerks, their households (“familias”), houses, things, and possessions, under the king’s and their own protection and keeping (“custodia”). No one of

the king's faithful subjects or enemies may cause them injury, where they have power to prevent it. Issued after Nicholaa and Geoffrey received a special mandate from the lord legate [Guala Bicchieri]. [January × May 1217]

B = Lincolnshire Archives, D&C, A/1/6, fol. 11r, no. 60 (The *Registrum* of Lincoln cathedral). ca. 1350. Printed in *Registrum Antiquissimum*, ed. Foster, 2:23–24, no. 337. Dated by Professor Nicholas Vincent to between the date of Geoffrey de Serland's appointment as Nicholaa's undersheriff in January 1217 and the battle of Lincoln on May 20, 1217. Geoffrey and Nicholaa were removed from the shrievalty on May 24, 1217: *Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala Bicchieri*, 38, no. 50.

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