

The Gendering of Dynastic Memory: Burial Choices of the Howards, 1485–1559

by NICOLA CLARK

Royal Holloway College, University of London

E-mail: Nicola.Clark.2008@live.rhul.ac.uk

Scholarship by Barbara Harris, James Daybell and others has recently highlighted the role played by elite women as custodians of dynastic memory in early modern England. The Dissolution of the Monasteries interrupted the commemorative process and constituted a threat to the mausoleums of the elite. Moving or rebuilding tombs represented, to some extent, a decision to remake or even to rewrite the family's history, a process which it is often assumed was at this time controlled by men. This article, however, through the example of the Howard family, demonstrates that women were equally involved; it investigates why this was so and the mechanics of the process.

Monuments and other forms of commemoration were a key way in which the English nobility maintained their social status and dynastic continuity during the economic, religious and political upheaval of the mid-sixteenth century. The changes to this practice across this period therefore reflect shifting anxieties, political allegiances and the negotiation of dynastic power and patriarchy, particularly since, as Barbara Harris has shown, women were predominantly responsible for commemoration.¹ Peter Sherlock has stated, put simply, that monuments

BL = British Library, London; LP = *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of Henry VIII*, ed. J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, London 1862–1932; TNA = The National Archives, Kew

I would like to thank Caroline Barron for suggesting that these burials deserved an article, and the archival staff of Arundel Castle for helping to locate relevant material. I would also like to thank Clive Burgess, Kirsten Claiden-Yardley, Jo Edge, Lisa Ford, Alden Gregory, Jackie Hall, Nick Holder, Phillip Lindley, Philip Norman, Christian Steer and Laura Wood for helpful input, conversations and, in some cases, proof-reading, along the way.

¹ Barbara J. Harris, 'The fabric of piety: aristocratic women and care of the dead, 1450–1550', *Journal of British Studies* xlviii (2009), 308–35.

show what early modern individuals wanted us to remember, and what they wanted to repress.² Analysing their commemorative behaviour across the Dissolution may therefore have much to tell us about elite identities and the role of women in their formation.

Recent studies have revealed a considerable amount about changes in burial practices across the Reformation from historical and art historical perspectives, demonstrating gradual shifts in choices of burial location alongside changed functions, styles, iconography and formats of commemoration in the form of tombs, monuments and literary memorials.³ Work by Vanessa Harding, Phillip Lindley and others has highlighted the specific impact of the Dissolution of the Monasteries on the evolution of commemorative practice, as it forced patrons to consider re-siting existing monuments and find alternative burial locations for themselves and their families.⁴ This arguably affected the elite, as monastic patrons, more than other social groups, despite a growing trend for non-conventual burial in the decades preceding the Dissolution.⁵ Lindley has noted, however, that as yet little work has been done on the aristocracy's reaction to the threat, or indeed the reality, of the danger to their monuments and mausoleums posed by the Dissolution.⁶ This means that scholars are generally still getting to grips with whether and when tombs were moved, and have yet to consider the identity and gender of the movers.

The Howard family's burials and commemoration are a useful entry point for an exploration of these issues, not least because the family was large and many of its monuments and associated documentary evidence survive today. Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the family's tombs at St Michael's, Framlingham, in Suffolk, which were recently the focus of a major Arts Council project aiming to create a digital reconstruction of their original intended form before their removal from

² Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and memory in early modern England*, Aldershot 2008, 3.

³ Clare Gittings, *Death, burial and the individual in early modern England*, London 1984; Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, religion and the family in England, 1480–1750*, Oxford 1998; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the dead in Reformation England*, Oxford 2002; Nigel Llewellyn, *The art of death: visual culture in the English death ritual, c. 1500–c. 1800*, London 1991, and *Funeral monuments in post-Reformation England*, Cambridge 2002; David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (eds), *The archaeology of Reformation, 1480–1580*, Leeds 2003; Sherlock, *Monuments and memory*; Michael Penman (ed.), *Monuments and monumentality*, Donington 2013.

⁴ Vanessa Harding, *The dead and the living in Paris and London, 1500–1670*, Cambridge 2002; Phillip Lindley, *Tomb destruction and scholarship: medieval monuments in early modern England*, Donington 2007.

⁵ See Karen Stöber, *Late medieval monasteries and their patrons*, Woodbridge 2007, 116–22.

⁶ Phillip Lindley, "'Disrespect for the dead"? The destruction of tomb monuments in mid-sixteenth-century England', *Church Monuments* xix (2004), 53–79.

Thetford Priory and installation at Framlingham.⁷ However, only part of the family's commemorative strategy has been examined. Howards were not only buried at Thetford Priory and at St Michael's, Framlingham, during the first half of the sixteenth-century, but also at St Mary's in Lambeth. Unusually, these additional burials were overwhelmingly of women and children, and all are closely linked to Agnes Tylney/Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk (d. 1545). This paper argues that Agnes's influence lay behind the formation of the Lambeth chapel as a family mausoleum, and that these simultaneous programmes of commemoration in different places allow us to glimpse negotiation of dynastic memory occurring as a result of the Dissolution within one family. The overwhelmingly feminine nature of the Lambeth chapel not only reveals the continued role of women in re-commemoration at the time of the Dissolution, but allows us to consider the longer-term commemorative consequences of this episode for elite women and their families.

Since very few of the Lambeth commemorations have survived to the present day, the form, structure and iconography of the monuments themselves are not a focus of this paper. The emphasis is rather on the choices of location made by Howard individuals, and the associated negotiation of dynastic memory. It is known that women were instrumental in setting up tombs and other forms of commemoration; it was part of their role as custodians of dynastic memory.⁸ Harris has shown that a large percentage of women were executors of their husbands' wills, and were thus made responsible for setting up their tombs, and that this remained the case across the entirety of the late medieval and early modern period.⁹ However, her work makes no mention of the impact of the Dissolution on women's commemorative activities, and nor do other scholarly considerations of gender and commemoration since they mostly begin in 1550.¹⁰ The limited body of work that does consider the impact of the Dissolution on aristocratic commemoration does not explicitly consider the role of gender within it. Often, the examples given of tombs moved state that men were responsible, and it is not clear whether this is a reality, a quirk of the evidence, or scholarly assumption.¹¹

⁷ See Phillip Lindley (ed.), *The Howards and the Tudors: studies in science and heritage*, Donington 2015.

⁸ For more on this role see James Daybell, 'Gender, politics and archives in early modern England', in James Daybell and Svante Norrhem (eds), *Gender and political culture in early modern Europe, 1400–1800*, London 2016.

⁹ Harris, 'The fabric of piety'.

¹⁰ For instance, Peter Sherlock, 'Patriarchal memory: monuments in early modern England', in Megan Cassidy-Welch and Peter Sherlock (eds), *Practices of gender in late medieval and early modern Europe*, Turnhout 2008, 279–9.

¹¹ See the examples given by Lindley in "Disrespect for the dead".

In a related historiographical vein, scholars have waxed lyrical on the dynastic ‘fictions’ created by nobles through their tombs. More often than not, it would seem, family mausoleums commemorating a number of generations were in fact erected by one single individual at one time, or at most by a few people in a couple of bursts fifty years or so apart.¹² These tombs, their inscriptions and the identities of those commemorated therefore represent only the dynastic story that their commissioner wished to portray, which means that many aristocratic family mausoleums are fabrications of family history and dynastic continuity. Understandably, this is particularly the case for those created as a result of the Dissolution. While this is true of the Howard burials at Framlingham, it is only partially true of the female burials at Lambeth, which raises questions concerning these women’s chosen identities and their expression, as well as the intended dynastic strategy in each place.

It is all too easy to forget that by the time of the Dissolution the Howard family’s nobility was only of fifty years’ standing.¹³ This is because they spent those years shoring up their noble pedigree, and this was partly done through memorialisation. Thetford Priory had previously been the mausoleum of the Mowbray family, who had held the dukedom of Norfolk before the Howards and from whom they were descended. John Howard, the first Howard duke of Norfolk, was buried at Thetford after his death at Bosworth in 1485.¹⁴ Thus while Thetford is often described as the traditional Howard mausoleum before the Dissolution, this had not been the case for very long, and it came about at the expense of other connections. John Howard’s parents and first wife were buried in St Mary’s, Stoke-by-Nayland, and his second wife chose to join them there in 1494 instead of being buried alongside her husband in his more prestigious mausoleum.¹⁵ This shows how memorialisation could not only mark a change in a family’s fortunes, but also, among the nobility, a subtle differentiation between name and title. John Howard was buried not as a member of the Howard family alongside his most immediate relatives, but as a duke of Norfolk among the ancestry pertaining to the title, in order to create an image of continuity and legitimacy.

He was joined by his granddaughter-in-law Anne Plantagenet/Howard, countess of Surrey, in about 1512; his son Thomas Howard, 2nd duke of

¹² See Sherlock, *Monuments and memory*, 17–40; Llewellyn, *Funeral monuments*, 40–8; Nigel Saul, *Death, art, and memory in medieval England: the Cobham family and their monuments, 1300–1500*, Oxford 2001.

¹³ John Howard, son of Sir Robert Howard of Tendring and of Margaret Mowbray, was granted the dukedom of Norfolk by Richard III in 1483.

¹⁴ Jackie Hall, ‘Thetford Priory: the unpublished documents of the Office of Works’, *English Heritage Historical Review* vii (2012), 79–93 at p. 84, and ‘Thetford Priory: patronage, burial, buildings, dissolution’, in Lindley, *The Howards and the Tudors*, 20–33.

¹⁵ This is shown in her will: TNA, PROB 11/10/315.

Norfolk, in 1524; Henry Fitzroy, duke of Richmond, son-in-law of Thomas, 3rd duke of Norfolk, in 1536; and the latter's youngest son, another Thomas Howard, in 1537.¹⁶ Thetford was therefore in use as a Howard mausoleum up until its dissolution in early 1540. Thomas Howard, 3rd duke of Norfolk, then the family patriarch, managed to secure the priory and its lands, but could not persuade the king to allow him to convert it into a lay college. Part of his justification for trying to do so lay in dynastic memory; he pleaded that his ancestors were buried there and that he was having two tombs built there, one for himself and one for his son-in-law, the king's own son Henry Fitzroy, who had been buried there in 1536.¹⁷ As is well known, following the closure of Thetford the duke created a new family mausoleum at St Michael's, Framlingham. The chronology of this, particularly concerning the movement of those two unfinished tombs, has been the subject of considerable debate, but the most recent research argues that the unfinished tombs were stored at the duke's residence at Kenninghall from the early 1540s while he had the chancel at Framlingham altered to accommodate them. His arrest in 1547 interrupted this and nothing more seems to have been done on the project until his release in 1553, at which point the tombs were installed and completed at Framlingham.¹⁸

Later excavation has shown that the duke was selective about who was memorialised at Framlingham. He did not simply move tombs from Thetford, but bodies as well. When the vaults beneath his own and Richmond's tomb were opened in the nineteenth century, six bodies were found.¹⁹ Four of these were almost certainly himself and his first wife Anne Plantagenet, and Richmond and Richmond's wife Mary Howard (d. c. 1555). The rather vague contemporary description of the excavation does not allow firm identification of the remaining two, but based on evidence of original burials at Thetford and of movements to Lambeth alongside those to Framlingham, it is most likely that they are John Howard, 1st duke of Norfolk, and Lord Thomas Howard, the 2nd duke's youngest son.²⁰ The duke, then, had not moved John Howard's existing tomb to Framlingham from Thetford, and he did not erect a new one, nor memorialise his half-brother Lord Thomas.

¹⁶ *The register of Thetford Priory*, ed. David Dymond, Oxford 1997, ii. 360, 469, 665, 695.

¹⁷ TNA, SP1/156, fo. 95.

¹⁸ Phillip Lindley, 'Materiality, movement and the historical moment', in Lindley, *The Howards and the Tudors*, 43–75. See also Lawrence Stone and Howard Colvin, 'The Howard tombs at Framlingham, Suffolk', *Archaeological Journal* cxxii (1966 for 1965), 159–71, and Richard Marks, 'The Howard tombs at Thetford and Framlingham: new discoveries', *Archaeological Journal* cxli (1985 for 1984), 252–68.

¹⁹ John Ashdown-Hill, 'The opening of the tombs of the dukes of Richmond and Norfolk, Framlingham, April 1841: the account of the Reverend J.W. Darby', *The Ricardian* xviii (2008), 100–7.

²⁰ *Pace* Ashdown-Hill who does not take Lord Thomas Howard into account.

There are no available statistics on the number of tombs or bodies that were moved after the Dissolution. Michael Hicks states that most of the actual monuments in monastic institutions were destroyed or auctioned off; Phillip Lindley, while agreeing that generally this was the case, includes a number of examples of nobles rescuing both bodies and tombs, and states that both general trends and actual numbers are ‘wholly unclear’.²¹ It may be that the 3rd duke had intended to commemorate his grandfather and half-brother in due course at Framlingham, but ran out of time. The status of both John Howard and Lord Thomas Howard in the eyes of the Tudor dynasty may also have stayed the 3rd duke’s hand. John Howard had died at Bosworth fighting against Henry Tudor. To memorialise him as the founder of the Howards’ nobility might have been considered tactless. Likewise, to memorialise Lord Thomas Howard, a man who had died as a traitor to the realm for clandestinely marrying the king’s niece, Lady Margaret Douglas, might also have been to court royal displeasure. To commemorate Henry Fitzroy, duke of Richmond, on the other hand, was probably undertaken partly as a form of ingratiation. Although good for the Howards, since the tomb commemorated their marital relationship to the royal family, it may also have been designed to assuage Henry’s anger at the ‘hole in the corner’ way in which Richmond had originally been buried, notwithstanding that this had been on the king’s specific orders.²² The Framlingham tombs, therefore, represent not only dynastic fiction, but also political fiction, since they suggest unbroken and undiminished loyalty on the part of the Howards and favour on the part of Henry VIII.

As a result, the 3rd duke of Norfolk has gone down in history as the major commemorator of the Howard family during this period. However, this in itself is a dynastic fiction. Thetford was not the only family burial place before the Dissolution; Framlingham was not the only place to which Howard tombs were moved; and the family patriarch was not the only Howard responsible for their being moved. This raises questions concerning the negotiation of dynastic memory and commemorative strategy within large noble dynasties across this period of upheaval.

The Howard chapel at St Mary’s, Lambeth, was completed in 1522.²³ St Mary’s was an obvious choice: across the road from Norfolk House, next

²¹ Michael Hicks, ‘English monasteries as repositories of dynastic memory’, in Penman, *Monuments and monumentality*, 224–38; Lindley, “Disrespect for the dead?”, 60–3.

²² ‘the kynges plesure was that his body shuld be conveyed secretly In a close cart unto thetford [inserted above: and at my sewte theer] and there so buried’: Thomas Howard, 3rd duke of Norfolk to Thomas Cromwell, TNA, SP1/105, fos 248–9 (*LP* xi. 233).

²³ It was consecrated in July of that year: *Lambeth churchwardens’ accounts, 1504–1645 and vestry book, 1610*, ed. Charles Drew (Surrey Record Society xviii, 1941), i. 41.

door to Lambeth Palace, and within sight of Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster, it was convenient and enjoyed considerable footfall, making it an excellent place in which to solicit prayers for the dead. There was no existing commemorative competition there with other nobles, and the archbishops of Canterbury did not trouble it, generally preferring to worship and bury their dead in their own chapel within Lambeth Palace at this time. Most secondary sources state that it was built by Thomas Howard, 2nd duke of Norfolk.²⁴ However, contemporary evidence argues that while Norfolk's name may have been on the bills, his second wife, Agnes Tylney/Howard, was the real impetus behind it.²⁵ It was she who provided the candles for the consecration of the chapel in July 1522.²⁶ The churchwardens' accounts consistently describe it as 'my Lady Norfolk's chapel'.²⁷ She herself called it 'my chappil at Lambhith' in her will of 1542.²⁸ Agnes had demonstrably stronger ties to Lambeth than her husband, since even before the chapel was built she had used St Mary's as a burial space for her attendants, suggesting that she spent considerable time there during the 1510s.²⁹ She was also left Norfolk House, the Lambeth property, in her husband's will of 1520, which might plausibly have acted as a spur for the building of the chapel.³⁰ Lambeth, then, was Agnes's personal powerbase, an ideal site for a family chapel.

It is not certain, however, that it was originally intended to function as a family mausoleum. For a start, there is no direct evidence that it was endowed as a chantry, though to build a chapel without such an endowment would have been exceedingly unusual at this time.³¹ Moreover, her husband's 1520 will specified that both he and Agnes were to be buried at Thetford Priory, in a tomb that he had already had designed to include both their effigies, and he did not change his testament after the Lambeth chapel was completed.³² At this stage, Thetford undoubtedly remained the higher-status choice. The mausoleum there held the thread of the dynasty's lineage through both Mowbray and Howard

²⁴ *Survey of London*, xxiii, ed. Howard Roberts and Walter H. Godfrey, London 1951, 137; T. Allen, *The history and antiquities of the parish of Lambeth*, London 1826, 32; Lindley, 'Materiality', 35.

²⁵ Coverture meant that the role of married women in such projects was often subsumed under their husbands' names: Catherine E. King, *Renaissance women patrons: wives and widows in Italy, c. 1350–1550*, Manchester 1998; Susan E. James, *The feminine dynamic in English art, 1485–1603: women as consumers, patrons and painters*, Aldershot 2009.

²⁶ *Lambeth churchwardens' accounts*, i. 41.

²⁷ *Ibid.* i. 73–4, 100; ii. 195.

²⁸ TNA, PROB 11/30/596.

²⁹ *Lambeth churchwardens' accounts*, i. 10 (1514), 18 (1516), 22 (1518).

³⁰ TNA, PROB 11/21/391.

³¹ Simon Roffey, *The medieval chantry chapel: an archaeology*, Woodbridge 2007, 6.

³² TNA, PROB 11/21/391. Excavations of the vault under his Thetford tombs did find two empty recesses for coffins: Hall, 'Thetford Priory: the unpublished documents', 85 and fig. 12.

ancestors; it was situated within the heart of Norfolk's estates; and it was a monastic institution.

Agnes, however, seems to have had different ideas. She was already using the church as a burial site for her servants, and since early modern people tended to view servants as part of the family, it could be argued that it was already a place of Howard commemoration.³³ She also appears to have ignored her husband's orders regarding his tomb. As his sole executor, she, like many widows, would have been responsible for carrying out his commemorative plans as expressed in his will, and these included her own effigy to lie alongside his. A near-contemporary drawing of it in a British Library heraldic manuscript, however, shows only a single tomb with Norfolk's effigy.³⁴ By the time that she finalised the plans, therefore – probably within a year of Norfolk's death – she had evidently decided against burial at Thetford; this was not, as is often stated, a decision taken after its Dissolution.³⁵

Her influence can also be detected in the other pre-Dissolution Howard burials at Lambeth, suggesting that she was involved in creating an alternative commemorative strategy to that of her stepson, the 3rd duke of Norfolk, at Thetford and Framlingham even before the Dissolution occurred. Three members of the family were buried at Lambeth before 1540, all women, and all had strong connections to Agnes. These were her daughter Elizabeth Howard/Radcliffe, Lady Fitzwalter, in 1534; her daughter-in-law Katherine Broughton/Howard, Lady Howard of Effingham, in 1535; and her stepdaughter (though older than she) Elizabeth Howard/Boleyn, countess of Wiltshire, in 1538. The personal and familial circumstances that caused these three women to be buried at Lambeth were all somewhat different, which suggests that their common connection to Agnes may have been a significant factor. The existence of any alternative mausoleum, whether or not it was originally designed to function as such, clearly shows that aristocratic commemoration was not as simple or as dynastically unified as is often assumed, and that men and women could be contributing to the family's memorialisation at the same time.

The choice of burial location for elite women, whether made by them or for them, was more complicated than that of men. Throughout their lives, most women accumulated families as they moved through one or more marriages, continuing to belong to their natal family while also belonging to each successive marital family. Choice of burial location was therefore

³³ David Cressy, 'Kinship and kin interaction in early modern England', *Past & Present* cxiii (Nov. 1986), 38–69.

³⁴ BL, ms Add. 45131, fo. 85.

³⁵ Lindley, 'Materiality', 45.

also a public and permanent choice of familial identity.³⁶ For these three women, their Howard connection was the highest in status that they possessed, and this may well be why they chose, or those close to them chose for them, to be commemorated as Howards before all other identities. For Elizabeth Howard/Radcliffe, Lady Fitzwalter, who died prematurely in 1534, not only were her natal Howards higher in status – though of less antiquity – than her marital family the Radcliffes, but in 1534 the latter had no fixed family mausoleum.³⁷ Nevertheless, it was unusual for a married woman who was not an heiress to be buried with her natal family, as it removed her from the dynastic ‘story’ that would be told by her marital family’s monuments.³⁸ Since Elizabeth died prematurely and left no will, it is unlikely that this was her own choice, and thus we are seeing a decision made by others. The choice of Lambeth over Thetford makes it very likely that Agnes was involved. This was also the case for Katherine Broughton/Howard, Lady Howard of Effingham, Agnes’s daughter-in-law. She also died prematurely, in 1535, and left no will. She was, however, a joint-heiress – which is why Agnes had originally bought her wardship in 1525 – and this would normally have made burial among her natal relations more likely.³⁹ However, the Howards were of far higher status than the Broughtons, and Katherine had not many Broughton relations living, which is probably why the Howards held sway.⁴⁰ The fact that she was both Agnes’s former ward and her daughter-in-law likewise strongly suggests her involvement in the choice of Lambeth.

In the case of Elizabeth Howard/Boleyn, countess of Wiltshire, buried at Lambeth in 1538, the choice of commemoration among natal family at the expense of marital connections was undoubtedly seen by her as an advantage. Her marital family had fallen out of favour in the years since her daughter Anne Boleyn’s execution in 1536. Though her husband had largely recovered his position it is nevertheless understandable that Elizabeth might prefer to be remembered as a Howard rather than as a Boleyn, both for her own perpetual memory and for the advantages that the remembrance of the Howard connection might give her remaining Boleyn offspring.⁴¹ Given the Boleyns’ association with high treason, it

³⁶ Barbara J. Harris, ‘Defining themselves: English aristocratic women, 1450–1550’, *Journal of British Studies* xlix (2010), 734–52.

³⁷ When her father-in-law Robert, 1st earl of Sussex, died in 1542 he was buried in St Laurence-Pountney, and Fitzwalter would join him in 1556. The ‘Sussex chapel’ in St Andrew’s Boreham in Essex was not erected until later in the sixteenth century, at which point both Robert and Henry’s remains were moved there.

³⁸ Harris, ‘Defining themselves’, 741–3.

⁴⁰ Sherlock, ‘Patriarchal memory’, 279–99.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 743.

⁴¹ Sherlock argues that this may have lain behind Mary Shaa’s choice of burial among her natal Hungerford relations in 1613: *ibid.* 294–5.

also seems possible that, if it had been left to him, her brother the 3rd duke of Norfolk may not have wanted her in his mausoleum to sully the carefully constructed image of unimpeachable loyalty, and it might suggest that the Lambeth mausoleum was less concerned with this. Elizabeth predeceased her husband Thomas by a year. Nevertheless, her burial in Lambeth broke convention, since it was normal for wives to be buried with their marital relatives whether or not their husband was already there, and indeed a year later Thomas was buried in St Peter's at Hever in Kent. This makes it possible to speculate that the pair had become estranged by 1538. However, it also suggests that Elizabeth's attachment to her natal status was unusually strong, and that she, or her Howard relatives, felt able to exercise it in the face of commemorative convention.⁴² The choice of Lambeth over Thetford may have been one of convenience, since she died in London, but it is possible that by now Lambeth was developing an identity as the burial place of the family's women.⁴³ By this point three women with blood or marital links to the Howards had been buried in this church, and no men.

The burial of Agnes's youngest son, Lord Thomas Howard, at Thetford in 1537 further supports the idea of gendered burial space immediately before the Dissolution. Clearly, Thetford had not been abandoned in favour of Lambeth as burials were still happening concurrently at both locations. This means that these 1530s burials must represent active choices, as neither place had become the 'default' mausoleum. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that Thetford remained the sole preserve of the 3rd duke, while Lambeth 'belonged' to Agnes, for it is clear that it was Agnes who secured her youngest son's Thetford burial. Lord Thomas had been charged with misprision of treason for clandestinely marrying the king's niece Lady Margaret Douglas in 1536, and had remained imprisoned in the Tower until he died there a year later.⁴⁴ Agnes wrote to the Privy Council asking to have his body for burial, and was allowed to have it so long as she buried him quietly and 'w[i]t[h] ought pomp'.⁴⁵ His burial is recorded in the priory's register.⁴⁶ Clearly, commemoration in the dynasty's major mausoleum was not merely the preserve of the family patriarch when there was also a senior widow in the family. Equally clearly, for some reason, Lord Thomas was considered a better 'fit' for Thetford than Lambeth. Lord Thomas belonged to a junior or secondary branch, so in that sense he did not match the rest of

⁴² Harris, 'Defining themselves', 742.

⁴³ 'She was conveyed from a house besides Baynard's Castle by barge to Lambeth': *The Lisle Letters*, ed. Muriel St Clare Byrne, Chicago 1981, v, no. 1139.

⁴⁴ David M. Head, "'Beyng ledde and seduced by the devyll': the attainder of Lord Thomas Howard and the Tudor law of treason', *Sixteenth Century Journal* xiii/4 (1982), 3–16. ⁴⁵ TNA, SP1/126, fo. 48 (LPxii/2, 1013). ⁴⁶ *Register of Thetford Priory*, ii. 695.

the commemorations at Thetford. On the other hand, he was male, so neither did he match the female burials already at Lambeth.

This gives some indication of the kind of negotiations of dynastic memory that had to occur in these situations, as it is hard to imagine either Agnes or the 3rd duke acting entirely in isolation here. It is also difficult to see what factor other than gender might have motivated this choice. Such gendering of burial spaces was very unusual among the nobility. It was not that women did not set up tombs – there is ample evidence to show that aristocratic women were often extremely active in commemorating their relatives across a number of different locations.⁴⁷ However, as a rule, they did not divide by gender in this way. Although there are other examples of ‘all-female’ commemorations, these were set up by one individual at one time. The remarkable monument to four women of the Neville and Manners families at St Leonard’s Shoreditch, for example, was set up in 1591 by Adeline Neville acting as executrix to her sister Katherine, Lady Constable. As Peter Sherlock has noted, two of these women were already represented in monument form on their husbands’ tombs elsewhere; this monument was thus evidently intended as a commemoration of female kinship connections.⁴⁸ Lambeth’s commemorations are not so straightforward, since they were put up gradually as female family members died, rather than all together with hindsight. This suggests that Lambeth’s role as a place for female memory evolved gradually under the aegis of Agnes and may then have been openly adopted pre-Dissolution, rather than being the original point of the chapel’s construction.

Lambeth, then, already had an intriguing collection of family burials, but following the Dissolution of Thetford in February 1540, its dynastic fiction grew stronger and its role as a space for female memory took on a new aspect. It is widely known that the 3rd duke moved bodies and tombs from Thetford to Framlingham, and his agency in doing so is clear, but in fact there was also movement between Thetford and Lambeth, most

⁴⁷ Harris, ‘The fabric of piety’; Christian Steer, ‘Commemoration and women in medieval London’, in Matthew Davies and Andrew Prescott (eds), *London and the kingdom: essays in honour of Caroline Barron*, Donington 2005, 230–45; Stephen Porter, ‘Francis Beaumont’s monument in Charterhouse chapel and Elizabeth, Baroness Cramond as patroness of memorials in early Stuart London’, *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* liv (2003), 111–19; Adam White, ‘Love, loyalty and friendship: education, dynasty and service: Lady Anne Clifford’s church monuments’, in Karen Hearn and Lynn Hulse (eds), *Lady Anne Clifford: culture, patronage and gender in 17th-century Britain*, York 2009, 43–71; Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, ‘“Prudentia ultra sexum”’: Lady Jane Bacon and the management of her families’, in Muriel C. McClendon, Joseph P. Ward and Michael MacDonald (eds), *Protestant identities: religion, society, and self-fashioning in post-Reformation England*, Stanford 1999, 100–24.

⁴⁸ Sherlock, *Monuments and memory*, 59–60.

notably of the 3rd duke's father, Agnes's husband, Thomas, 2nd duke of Norfolk (d. 1524). At some point during the 1540s a brass was set up to commemorate him in the Lambeth chapel. While it is sometimes said that this had come directly from his Thetford tomb, a contemporary drawing strongly suggests that the Thetford tomb was a stone effigy and not a brass, which would mean that the Lambeth brass was newly made.⁴⁹ It is clear in either case that the 2nd duke's body was moved from Thetford, because later excavations at Thetford found his vault empty of coffins.

The configuration of bodies found at Framlingham leaves no room for him to have been moved there; all six are logically accounted for without him among them. His body must therefore have gone to Lambeth, and this is really quite extraordinary under the circumstances. To move a body all that distance, with or without brass or tomb, was no light or cheap undertaking. Some have assumed that the 3rd duke was responsible for it, given his activities at Framlingham; but it would have been very odd for him to have gone to the extra trouble and expense of moving his father the far greater distance to Lambeth when he could simply have incorporated him advantageously into the dynastic scheme at nearby Framlingham.⁵⁰ It was, therefore, probably his widow Agnes, the dowager duchess of Norfolk, who did this, thereby changing the all-female composition of the Lambeth chapel in light of the events of the Dissolution and showing that elite women as well as men were involved in dynastic re-commemoration.⁵¹

But how she was able to accomplish this? It is difficult to see why the 3rd duke would not have sought to include his father in the dynastic scheme at Framlingham. The 2nd duke was a key figure in the dynasty's history; he had regained the dukedom of Norfolk for the family following his victory at Flodden in 1513, he had set an exemplary example of procreation, and his reputation was not stained with any taint of treason. Given the cachet that he would have added to the commemorative scheme at Framlingham, it seems likely that his move to Lambeth was the result of Agnes's claim upon him, rather than a deliberate exclusion from Framlingham. This suggests that, in this case, she, and not her stepson, was 'in charge' of this particular commemoration. Widows did traditionally play a prominent role in the commemoration of their spouses, largely because they were usually appointed as their husband's executrix; this was indeed the case for Agnes, and it would appear that her role here held sway even twenty years later. The memorialisation of the 2nd duke seems, therefore, to have been seen as the dynastic 'right' of Agnes,

⁴⁹ BL, MS Add. 45131, fo. 85.

⁵⁰ See Lindley, 'Materiality', 55.

⁵¹ For the under-appreciated role of aristocratic widows in commemoration see Harris, 'The fabric of piety'.

rather than of her stepson.⁵² Her role in the dynasty's commemorative strategy is therefore clearly greater than has been acknowledged hitherto; could this even suggest that she, and not her stepson the 3rd duke, was calling the overall shots on the family's re-commemoration after the Dissolution? The Lambeth chapel now deliberately reflected Agnes's own secondary branch of the family, drawing a dynastic picture concerned with the transmission of the Howard name, and not the title of duke of Norfolk.

Her activities here were bound up with national politics. Agnes was arrested in 1541 for her role in the alleged pre-marital adulteries of her granddaughter Queen Katherine Howard. She was attainted for misprision of treason and imprisoned within the Tower between December 1541 and May 1542.⁵³ Clearly not expecting to survive, she made her will in March, in which she chose burial in Lambeth, 'in suche place whereas I haue prepared my Tombe'.⁵⁴ The fact that she made no mention of her husband might suggest that his removal to Lambeth had either already been accomplished or was in train, which would fit well with the dissolution of Thetford in February 1540. The reference to her tomb shows just how disruptive the Dissolution was for many noble families, since it argues that Agnes had made her own tomb before the question of her husband's removal had arisen, which now made joint commemoration more difficult. Nevertheless she left no instructions to alter her tomb to include him. Antiquarian accounts of the Lambeth commemorations show that nobody else did so, for while Agnes's tomb comprised a chest topped with a brass in the middle of the chapel, her husband's brass was simply set into the floor.⁵⁵ This does not follow the usual patriarchal commemorative pattern, for it elevates Agnes above her husband, where, according to bloodline and status, she had no right to be. This is clearly an unplanned, accidental consequence of the upheaval caused by the Dissolution. Yet the fact that Agnes left it that way places her among those women who worked commemoration to their own dynastic advantage, as the effect created is of a dynastic matriarch at the head and heart of her family.

There is more evidence to shore up this interpretation. As well as the commemorations already described, antiquaries of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries found a series of small brass plaques within the Howard chapel at Lambeth, commemorating a number of Howard sons who had died as babies or young children.⁵⁶ All but one were

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *LP* xvii, 362 (25).

⁵⁴ TNA, PROB 11/30/596.

⁵⁵ See their depiction in Henry Lilly, 'The genealogie of the princeley familie of the Howards' (1638), unpubl. manuscript, Arundel Castle Archive, West Sussex. See also D. Lysons, *Environs of London*, London 1792, i. 286.

⁵⁶ The number of children is not absolutely certain because the antiquarian accounts are not wholly unanimous: Lilly, *Genealogie*; John Aubrey, *The natural history*

Agnes's sons by her husband Thomas, 2nd duke of Norfolk, the earliest dated 1501 and the last 1517. What has never before been realised is that these cannot have been installed there at the time, because the chapel was not built until 1522. In fact, the chances are that none of these children was originally buried at Lambeth at all; the churchwardens' accounts recorded burials meticulously in this era before official burial registers, including those of children, but they do not mention any of these Howard burials. The memorials, therefore, must have been installed later on, with or without bodies beneath them. It is possible that the brasses themselves were brought to Lambeth from elsewhere – perhaps Thetford – because their inscriptions, in Latin and with a formulaic ending ('cuius anime propicietur deus amen'), are more akin to early sixteenth-century memorials than ones made in the turbulent 1540s. Whether made anew or moved, once again the only person to benefit from their installation was their mother Agnes.

The Dissolution of the Monasteries therefore caused Lambeth to shift slightly from a place of female commemoration to one that commemorated a secondary dynastic branch, that of Thomas, 2nd duke of Norfolk, and his second wife Agnes Tylney/Howard. The chief impetus behind this was undoubtedly Agnes. By the time that she died in 1545, she had created a space commemorating her own dynastic line and thus her own version of Howard family history, for by this point both her husband and most of the children who had predeceased her were buried there.⁵⁷ It was not wholly unusual for a woman to create a commemorative scheme like this – later on it would be done by Lady Anne Clifford at Appleby and Skipton for similar dynastic reasons – but at this time it appears to have been far less common.⁵⁸ She could not, however, have done this without negotiating with the then-patriarch, her stepson the 3rd duke, since both were moving bodies and/or tombs from Thetford at around the same time; nevertheless, the fact that she was able to secure her husband the 2nd duke for Lambeth when he would have added handsomely to her stepson's scheme at Framlingham might suggest that her authority 'trumped' the latter's, and that we should think far more seriously about the role played by women in the sepulchral musical chairs provoked by the Dissolution.

and antiquities of the county of Surrey, London 1719, v. 237–8; John Strype, *A survey of the cities of London and Westminster*, London 1720, i, appendix i, p. 84.

⁵⁷ The exceptions were Lord Thomas Howard, her youngest son, who was moved to Framlingham, and her youngest daughter Dorothy Howard-Stanley, countess of Derby, whose exact death date is unknown.

⁵⁸ White, 'Love, loyalty and friendship'. I have not found any directly comparable contemporary examples.

While some of Lambeth's commemoration was evidently set up more or less at one time in the typical manner of dynastic monumental fictions, the use of this mausoleum did not end there. This is not necessarily surprising, as at Framlingham two more Howards were buried and commemorated during the second half of the century. However, at Lambeth, all the additional Howard burials were widows, and two out of the three specified burial there in their wills, thus doing much to return Lambeth to its pre-Dissolution state as a place of female memory, and adding to our understanding of the longer term consequences of the Dissolution for female commemoration.⁵⁹

Many widowed noblewomen were left sepulchrally stranded during the 1550s and '60s, unable to join husbands who had died and been buried in monastic institutions before the Dissolution and perhaps without the wherewithal to have them moved. Nigel Llewellyn posits that the sudden flurry of commemorations to lone noble widows in Westminster Abbey was a direct result of this.⁶⁰ The three Howard women at Lambeth, however, made different choices, all of which were predicated on personal relationships and resulting identities. Two of them were the daughters of Agnes Tylney/Howard and her husband the 2nd duke: Katherine Howard/ap Rhys/Daubeney, dowager countess of Bridgwater, in 1554, and Anne Howard/de Vere, dowager countess of Oxford, in 1559. The other was Elizabeth Stafford/Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk, widow of the 3rd duke, in 1558.

The only one of them to fall into the category of having a husband already buried in a monastic institution was Agnes's eldest daughter Anne, dowager countess of Oxford. She had been the wife of John de Vere, 14th earl of Oxford, and was widowed in 1526, at which point her husband was buried with his ancestors in the family mausoleum at Earls Colne Priory.⁶¹ By 1559 this was long-dissolved, and though her husband's tomb was still there, it is unlikely that additional burials could have occurred.⁶² Three of the tombs had been moved to the local parish church, and the family had also begun to bury at St Nicholas's Church in

⁵⁹ TNA, PROB 10/27 (Katherine Howard/ap Rhys/Daubeney, countess of Bridgwater, 1554); PROB 11/42A/285 (Elizabeth Stafford/Howard, duchess of Norfolk, 1558).

⁶⁰ Llewellyn, *Funeral monuments*, 151.
⁶¹ 'Houses of Benedictine monks: Priory of Earl's Colne', in William Page and J. Horace Round (eds), *A history of the county of Essex*, ii, London 1907, 102–5.

⁶² Most of the de Vere tombs were left at Earls Colne after the Dissolution and were destroyed with the rest of the buildings in 1736. Three had been moved to the local parish church before this time. In 1825 these three were taken back to the ruins of Earls Colne Priory and reassembled. They were moved to St Stephen's Chapel in Bures, Suffolk, in 1935: 'Earls Colne: priory buildings', in Janet Cooper (ed.), *A history of the county of Essex, X: Lexden hundred (part) including Dedham, Earls Colne and Wivenhoe*, London 2001, 92.

Hedingham. Anne could conceivably, and traditionally, have joined her marital family at either of those two places. Her marriage, however, had not been the proverbial bed of roses, and her husband's death had closely followed a lengthy dispute over his conduct that had culminated in a legal ordinance to regulate his wild behaviour.⁶³ Relations with the next earl, too, had not been positive for Anne, who had spent much of her early widowhood embroiled in disputes over inheritance and had had her house and park broken into several times on his orders.⁶⁴ She had never remarried, and so it is easy to understand why, thirty years later, she might value her Howard identity more than the de Vere. Agnes's commemorative activity at Lambeth across the Dissolution thus gave her daughter the alternative option of being remembered as part of her personal branch of her natal dynasty.

Katherine's choice may also have reflected a poor second marriage alongside strong natal attachment. Her first husband, Rhys ap Griffith, had been executed for treason in 1531 and buried at the Crutched Friars, and thus she could not join him there. Her second marriage, to Henry Daubeney, 1st earl of Bridgwater (d. 1548), was not positive, and the couple appear to have negotiated some sort of separation in 1535/6, which undoubtedly explains why Katherine did not seek to join him in perpetuity.⁶⁵ Bridgwater's burial place is unknown; Katherine's 1554 will states 'my Bodye to be buryed in my Ladie my mother tombe in the chapell w[ith]in the p[ar]ryshe churche in Lambeth'.⁶⁶ This was evidently a deliberate and considered choice, since unlike her sister Anne, she did have the option of joint commemoration with one of her husbands but had eschewed this. It did, however, place her in the unusual position of having chosen to be remembered by her natal identity. Even more unusual was her request for burial within her mother's tomb. By this it is likely that she meant the vault below the tomb itself, but this is none the less odd, particularly since the tomb and its brass were never altered to reflect Katherine's presence; I have found no comparable examples.

⁶³ Henry Ellis, 'Copy of an order made by Cardinal Wolsey, as Lord Chancellor, respecting the management of the affairs of the young earl of Oxford', *Archaeologia* xix (1821), 62–5.

⁶⁴ Anne, dowager countess of Oxford to Thomas, Cardinal Wolsey, 11 Aug. 1526, TNA, SP1/30, fo. 129; Anne to Charles Brandon, 1st duke of Suffolk, 22 Aug. 1526, SP1/30, fo. 133; Thomas Howard, 3rd duke of Norfolk, Charles Brandon, Henry Courtenay, 1st marquis of Exeter, and Thomas Boleyn, Lord Rochford, to Wolsey, 24 Aug. 1526, SP1/39, fo. 78; Wolsey to John de Vere, 15th earl of Oxford, July 1528, SP1/49, fo. 169.

⁶⁵ Henry Daubeney, Lord Daubeney, to Cromwell, 10 Oct. 1535, TNA, SP1/97, fo. 118; 'he [Daubeney] shalbe now dyvorsyd from my lady by there both assentes': George Rolle to Lady Lisle, 4 Mar. 1536, SP3/9, fo. 36.

⁶⁶ TNA, PROB 10/27.

Katherine and her mother do seem to have had a particularly close relationship and this probably helps to explain Katherine's choice. The two had lived in close proximity for a number of years, and the depositions taken at the time of the scandal surrounding Queen Katherine Howard in the early 1540s show both that Katherine's children were being brought up within Agnes's household, and that Katherine herself spent a considerable amount of time there. Indeed, her interrogator wrote in evident exasperation that 'she sheweth herself her motheres dowghter, that is oon that will by no menys confesse any thing that may towche her'.⁶⁷ In the years after Agnes's death Katherine remained in Lambeth, and her will was made there in 1554.⁶⁸

The choice of Lambeth made by Elizabeth Stafford/Howard, duchess of Norfolk, is harder to explain, for she did not belong to this line of the family. By rights and custom, she ought to have been buried alongside her husband, Thomas, 3rd duke of Norfolk, who had died in 1554 and been buried in Framlingham. Indeed, there is some debate over the identity of the female effigy on Norfolk's tomb, since there is no heraldry to make it absolutely clear whether it represents his first wife Anne Plantagenet, or his second wife Elizabeth.⁶⁹ This aside, there is no doubt that Elizabeth's body was buried in Lambeth, because she is listed in the burial register, and her tomb, with its inscription composed by her brother Henry, Lord Stafford, was still there in the early eighteenth century.⁷⁰ Yet again, her unhappy marriage may lie behind her choice. Her relationship with the 3rd duke had infamously disintegrated in the 1530s and the couple had been estranged ever since. There may also have been no room for her at Framlingham, if the effigies atop Norfolk's tomb did indeed represent himself and his first wife. She could not join her natal family, since the Staffords had no clear burial site at this time, and the Howards had by now somewhat eclipsed the disgraced Stafford dynasty in terms of status.⁷¹ For Elizabeth, then, Lambeth was perhaps the only palatable remaining option; it allowed her to be commemorated as a Howard, but not as the wife of an objectionable husband.

When taken together, then, the proliferation of female burials at Lambeth look as though they might be a typical dynastic fiction, set up

⁶⁷ 'the ladie brigewateres who hath a dawghter and ij sonnes in the duches off norff hows': TNA, SP1/168, fo. 124; interrogatories for the countess of Bridgewater show the extent of her knowledge of that household: SP1/168, fos 76–7; the council in London to John Russell, Lord Admiral, and the rest of the council with the king, re. interrogations: TNA, SP1/168, fo. 113.

⁶⁸ Allen, *Parish of Lambeth*, 439.

⁶⁹ Lindley, 'Materiality', 45.

⁷⁰ London Metropolitan Archives, P85/MRY1/342, fo. 155; Aubrey, *Natural history*, v. 236.

⁷¹ The Staffords had lost the dukedom of Buckingham with the execution of Elizabeth's father in 1521, and her brother Henry had not managed to regain it.

at one time by one individual to commemorate the family's women. In fact, only the memorials to the sole Howard man and the children fall into this category, which in many ways makes the female burials all the more interesting. They seem to imply that the Howard identity was particularly important to all of these women, regardless of whether it was their natal or marital identity. Since most other female memorialisation is based on patriarchal dynastic inheritance, these commemorations document an unusually strong case of dynastic loyalty. Naturally, other motives also come into play here; some women could not join husbands who were buried in monasteries; for some, their 'other' families did not have suitable mausoleums; cost may have prohibited an ostentatious burial at Westminster Abbey, which is what some other noblewomen in similar circumstances had opted for. For these Howard women, unhappy marriages are the most obvious common factor to explain their choice of Lambeth, and this suggests that, contrary to existing scholarship, personal relationships could indeed impact burial choices.

Though these female burials represent separate decisions, made at the individual times of death of these women, those decisions could not have been taken without the pre- and post-Dissolution memorialisations influenced by Agnes Tylney/Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk, which demonstrates the longer term impact of the Dissolution of the Monasteries on elite burial practices. The example of the Howards also shows us how the boundaries between what is a 'collective' and what an 'individual' commemorative strategy are blurred. Agnes does not seem to have originally designed her chapel specifically as a space for female memory; the circumstances of these individual deaths, and negotiations with the other families involved and with other Howards, are what allowed her to develop it in this way.

Agnes's role in the Howard commemorations across the early sixteenth century was evidently greater than has been appreciated. Her influence lies behind Lambeth and its development not only as a family mausoleum, but as a female burial space. Preliminary research indicates that the latter was very unusual for this period, suggesting an interestingly gendered understanding of kinship relations and of dynastic memory that would bear further comparative study. Not only was Agnes involved in Lambeth, but she also appears to have had influence over commemoration at Thetford before the Dissolution, as witnessed by her agency in burying her son, Lord Thomas, there in 1537. Through her appropriation of her husband for Lambeth after Thetford's dissolution in 1540, she also affected her stepson's scheme at Framlingham, since the 2nd duke's commemoration at Lambeth removed a vital link from the 3rd duke's patriarchal commemorative strategy. For the Howards, then, we need to reassess the existing narrative; the 3rd duke, while clearly responsible for re-commemoration at Framlingham, was not acting alone in terms of the

dynasty's overall memorialisation, and in fact the moving of the 2nd duke may even suggest that Agnes's authority was greater than his own in this regard, though in the absence of further evidence this has to remain somewhat speculative. Regardless, it shows that when the structure of a family was more complicated than simply having a mature patriarch at its head, so too was dynastic identity and dynastic commemoration. More broadly, the Howards' burial activities across the Dissolution add to existing work by showing that elite women as well as men were involved in the commemorative fall-out of the Dissolution. We therefore need to think more about the process of commemoration, as well as the end result of the tombs themselves, in terms of gender and family, and what this can tell us about the effect of the Dissolution of the Monasteries on elite identities in early modern England.