

# The Parker Family Tomb

By

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THE  
TUDOR  
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## Introduction

One of the best-known and least-understood personalities of the Tudor era is Jane Boleyn, Lady Rochford, née Jane Parker. In an effort to discover more about her and her motivations, I began to research her family since one's childhood and upbringing often play a large role in the formation of character. The Parker family includes several interesting figures besides Lady Rochford, including one of Richard III's banner bearers at Bosworth; the first translator of Petrarch into English; several notable Roman Catholic recusants; one of the judges at the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots; and the man who exposed Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot to the authorities.<sup>1 2 3</sup> One of the discoveries I found during my research is the Parker family tomb complex and its enigmatic memorial inscriptions in the Church of St. Giles in Great Hallingbury, Essex.

Portions of these memorial inscriptions in the original Latin or in translation appear in various academic studies and compilations of English peerages; but nowhere do all six inscriptions appear in their entirety. One of these inscriptions is for Lady Rochford's grandfather, Sir William Parker, who started his career in the scullery of Edward IV and rose to a seat on Richard III's privy council. In order to investigate what these inscriptions might be able to tell us about the Parker family – especially about Sir William's rags to riches story –

Tim Ridgway of the Tudor Society asked photographer Paul Walker to visit St. Giles and take pictures of what remains of the Parker Tomb. This article discusses our findings about the tomb as well the memorial inscriptions in both the original Latin and in translation.



**Figure 1:** St. Giles Church in Great Hallingbury, Essex. ©2015 by Paul Walker

## The Tomb Setting

Great Hallingbury is in Essex, sandwiched between the River Stort to the west and the royal forest of Hatfield Broad Oak to the east. In the late Medieval and Tudor periods, the estate there was known as Hallingbury Morley for its association with the Lords Morley.<sup>4</sup> The moated and half-timbered manor of Hallingbury Hall was next to the village church of St. Giles, built to replace an older manor sometime after 1435. It was still standing in 1653.<sup>5</sup>

Though Lady Rochford's father and mother both were attendants in the household of Countess Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, it may be that Jane Parker was born and raised in the small manor of Hallingbury Hall and not in the early sixteenth century<sup>6</sup> 45-room mansion of Morley House which hosted Elizabeth I on her 1561 and 1576 progresses. Morley House<sup>7</sup>, better known by the modern name of Hallingbury Place, was erected sometime later probably by Jane's father, Sir Henry Parker, Lord Morley. It was situated a kilometer to the east of Hallingbury Hall on the other side of the manorial parkland.<sup>8</sup> Only the former stable block of Morley House remains today; the rest of the mansion was razed in 1926.

Hallingbury Morley became a preferred residence for the Parkers who inherited the Morley title through marriage. The importance of this manorial estate to the Parker family is illustrated by the fact that Lady Rochford's father chose the local church of St. Giles for a family tomb. Eventually, this tomb became the resting place for six people: Jane's aforementioned father Henry Parker, Lord Morley; Jane's mother, Alice St. John; Jane's grandmother, Alice Lovell, heiress of the Morley title and lands; Jane's grandfather, Sir William Parker; Jane's great aunt, Elizabeth de la Pole, Dowager Lady Morley and niece of Edward IV; and Agnes Parker, Jane's great grandmother.

The Parker-Morley tomb was of marble, built against the north wall of the chancel at St. Giles. As an anonymous late eighteenth century history of Essex described it:<sup>9</sup>

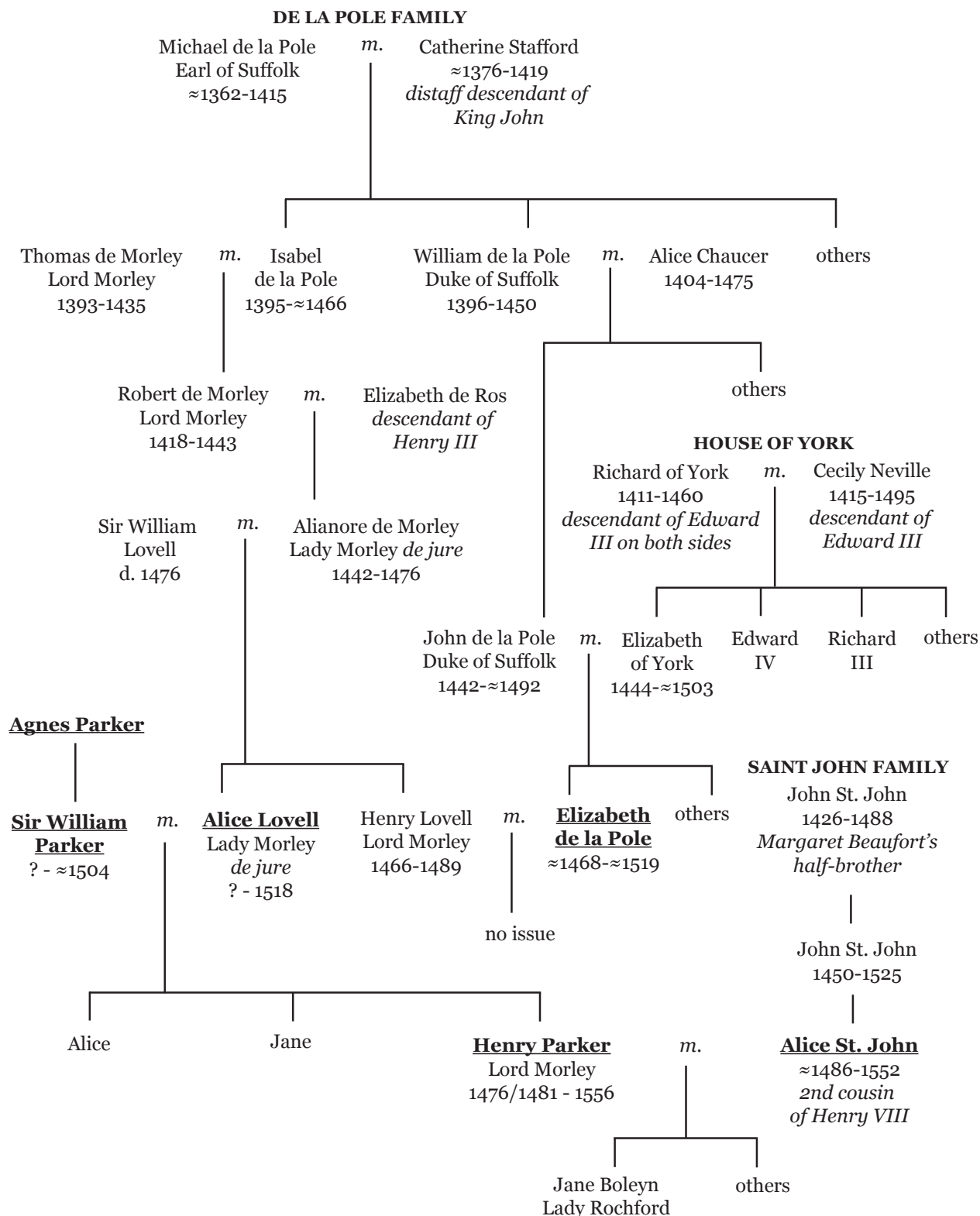
“Against the north wall of the chancel is a large tomb stone, and over it six plates of brass, containing six Latin inscriptions in old English letters for the family of Morley.”

This description is an understatement since the one surviving remnant of the tomb is a very fine sculpture. The original form of the tomb is now lost since the church was renovated and expanded in 1874.<sup>10</sup> During the renovation, the six plaques and a sculpted figure of a standing cadaver from the tomb were removed from the sanctuary and mounted on the north wall of the bell tower, which is on the opposite end of the church from the chancel.<sup>11</sup> As one commenter remarked:<sup>12</sup>

“All trace of the tomb has disappeared, except for a figure, which in 1938 was situated, along with the six brasses, so high up in the tower as to be accessible only with difficulty.”

This too is a bit of an understatement, as can be seen from the description of the postrenovation Parker Tomb posted inside the church itself:

“This is one of the oldest tablets in the church. It is now in a most unfavorable position, being high up on the north wall of the choir vestry. A new bell ringing platform, still under construction while this record was being compiled, gives access to those who care to climb up to see it....The inscription on the plates is chiseled in Gothic script, is in Latin and is indecipherable, only letters here and there being legible in extremely bad light.”



**Figure 2: PARKER FAMILY TREE**  
The names of the people buried in the tomb are underlined



## A Description of the Plaques and Inscriptions

Using the photographs taken by Paul Walker on behalf of the Tudor Society, I used photographic filtering software to redact the inscriptions on the memorial plaques and have translated the six epitaphs. They are presented here for each of the six people buried in the original chancel tomb.

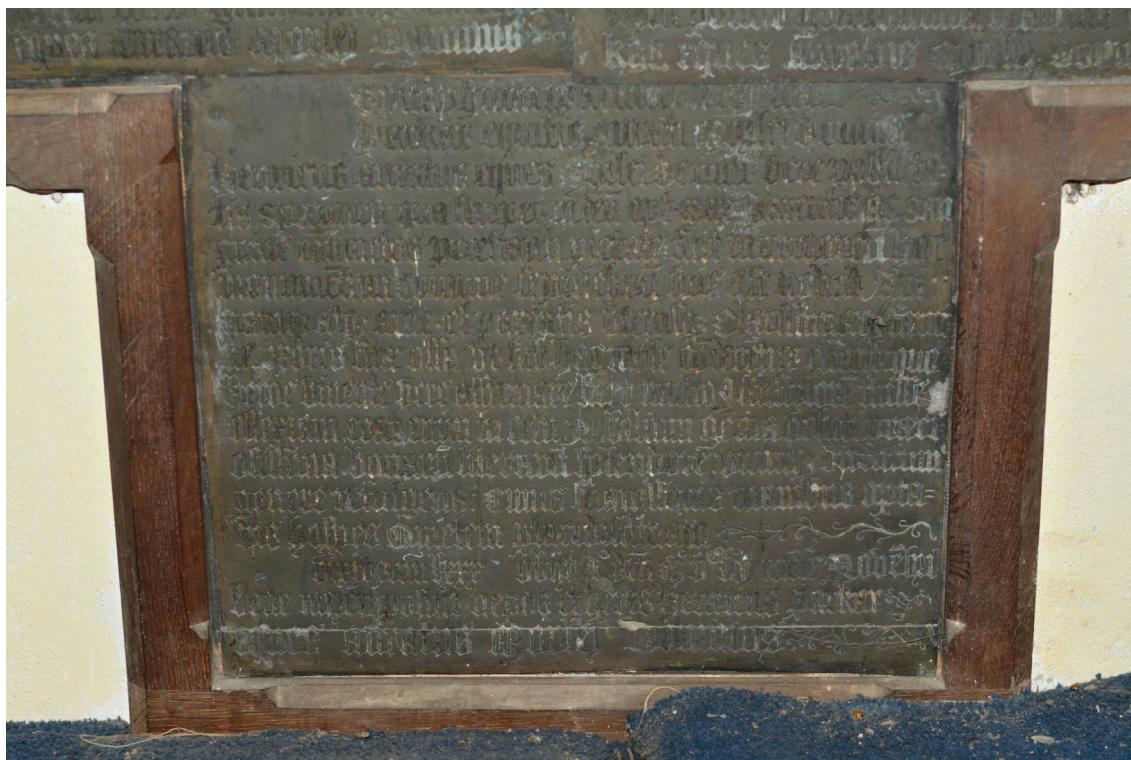
The letters of the memorial texts were inscribed or embossed. This was obvious from enlargements of the photographs, since tool marks can be seen clearly from where the craftsman “walked” his metal punches to form the letters. The letters themselves are what paleographers would classify as Gothic textus quadratus<sup>13</sup>, commonly called blackletter. This is the classic book hand of the Medieval books of hours and bibles; it was also used extensively on Medieval and Renaissance memorial brasses throughout England. The similarity of the letters i, n, m, and u in blackletter make this hand difficult to read where these letters occur next to each other. In modern typography, blackletter is known as a display font: when written, it is impressive to look at but it is not exactly easy on the eyes to read, making it appropriate for short showy texts on signs, monuments, tombs and plaques on public works.



**Figure 3:** The cadaver sculpture – all that remains of the marble Parker-Morley tomb. ©2015 by Paul Walker

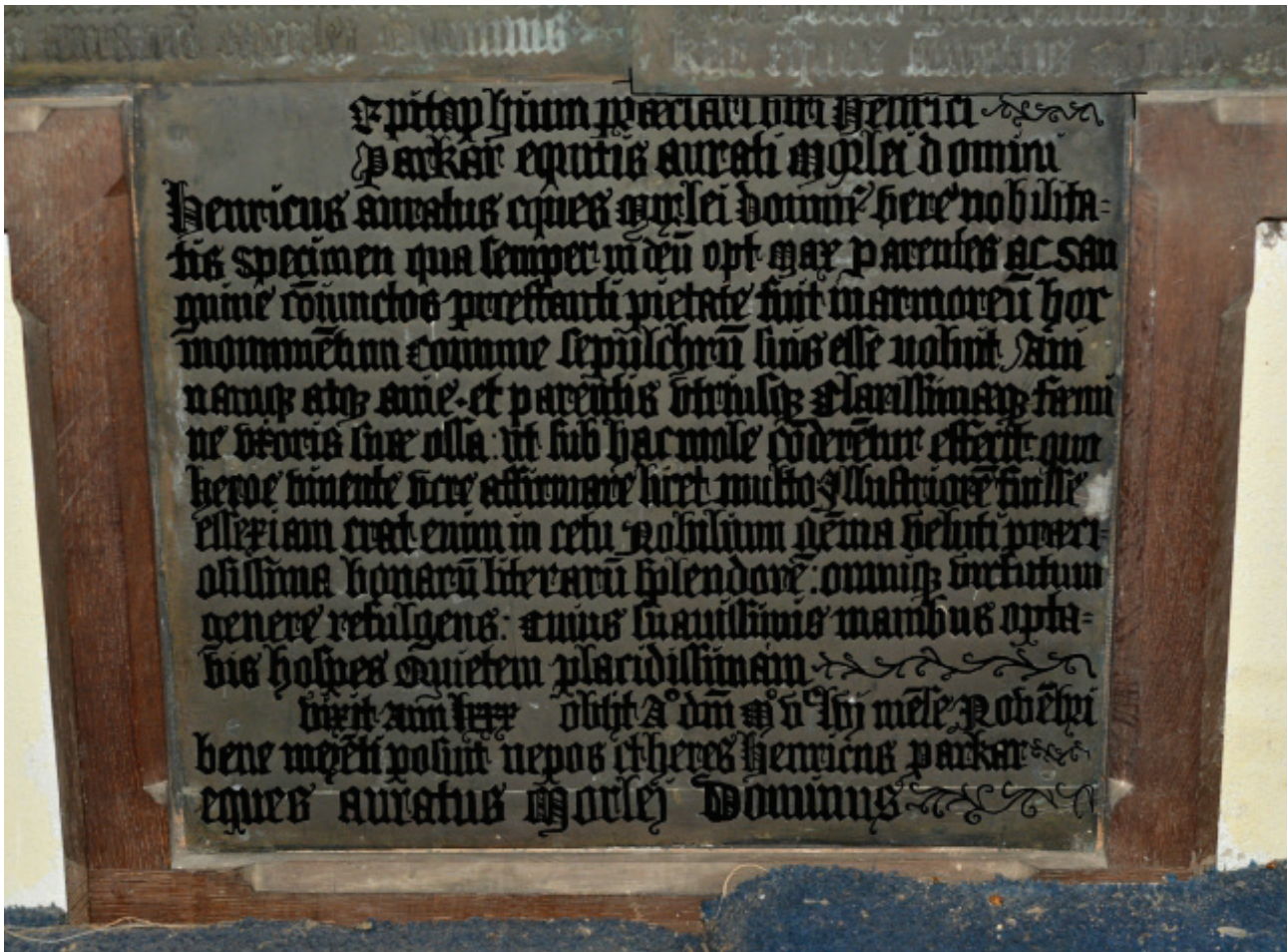


**Figure 4:** Looking down from the bell-ringing platform at the Parker-Morley tomb, sculpture and memorial plaques on the wall of west tower at St. Giles, ©2015 by Paul Walker



**Figure 5:** Memorial plaque for Henry Parker before filtering, ©2015 by Paul Walker



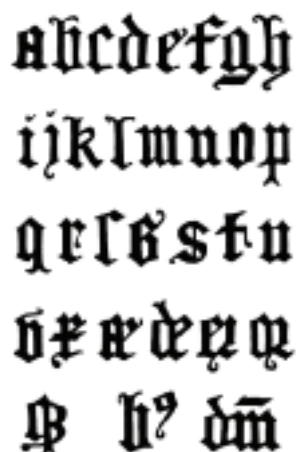


**Figure 6:** memorial plaque for Henry Parker after filtering to “lift” the letters from the background. The lower case letter forms on the plaques closely resemble those of the final alphabet shown in Albrecht Dürer’s *On the Just Shaping of Letters*<sup>14</sup> and several of them are identical.

The upper case letters can only be described as decorative excess, some of which are pleasing but others are overwrought or just plain clumsy. Overall, the appearance of the letters on the plaques is nowhere near as neat and regular as those found in the best masterpieces of Medieval manuscripts or on the majority of English memorial brasses. Compared to other English memorial plaques and monuments, these inscriptions are clumsy, with a few spelling mistakes, uneven lines, inconsistent and illogical indentation, and some badly-formed letters.

The use of the extensive system of Medieval Latin ligatures<sup>15</sup> like *æ* and contractions like *ū* for *um*, *un* or *us* is prevalent. This usage is not uncommon for Late Medieval, Tudor and Elizabethan memorial plaques. One reference on English brasses lists six pages of blackletter contractions and ligatures used on English memorial plaques and slabs.<sup>16</sup> Both punctuation and capitalization are irregular and form no patterns that are helpful to the reader. Also, numbers are written with both Roman or modern numerals, sometimes on the same plaque.

For the inscriptions, I list the Latin as written on the plaques, phrase by phrase followed by my translation for each phrase. Letters inside square brackets are where I have expanded a contraction or ligature. With the exceptions of the ligatures and contractions, I have preserved the actual spelling on the plaques including spelling mistakes, which I have identified by underlining. I have italicized when a letter *u* is used for *v*, *v* for *u* and a letter *j* or *y* for *i*. Letters inside parentheses in the Latin text were inserted by me to correct a misspelled Latin word when that letter was missing.



**Figure 7:** examples of the letters, ligatures and contractions lifted from the memorial plaques.

First row: *a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h;*

second row: *i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p;*

third row: *q, r, tall-s, gothic-s, modern s, t, u;*

fourth row: *v, x, ligature for æ, ligature for de, ligature for er, ligature for or;*

fifth row: *ligature for que, contraction symbol for bus, barred-dm contraction for dominus*

Latin is a very sparse language and uses only one or two words where English would use several more. Because of the lean nature of Latin, I have added some words in places in the English translation to help make certain meanings clear<sup>17</sup>, and these additions are placed within parentheses. Note that word order in Latin rarely maps to word order in English.

While much of this textual detail may look trivial, I believe the neat Roman numerals vs. the clumsy modern numbers are importance because of what they may imply about the provenance of the plaques, as we will discuss in just a bit – but first, here are the translations and some brief descriptions of the people they memorialize.



## Henry Parker, Lord Morley



**Figure 8:** Albrecht Dürer portrait of Henry Parker, Lord Morley, done when Lord Morley was in Nuremberg in late 1523. This is the only portrait Dürer did of an Englishman and is currently owned by the British Museum.

Sir Henry Parker, Lord Morley, was Lady Rochford's father. Despite his important position in the world of English literature, there is no full-length biography of Lord Morley.

The best biographical study is perhaps that by David Starkey.<sup>18</sup> Morley was born in either 1476 or 1481. The 1476 date is based on his memorial plaque. The 1481 date is reported by most modern scholars, including Starkey and the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.<sup>19</sup>

This date is based on the assumption that the dinner Henry Parker described in his often cited *Account of the Miracles of the Sacrament* is the one which Margaret Beaufort gave to celebrate the elevation of her friend William Smith as Bishop of Lincoln in 1496<sup>20</sup>, when Henry described himself as 15 years old.<sup>21</sup>

His birthplace is unknown, though it may have been London where his father was a resident at the time of Henry's birth, or any of the Morley baronial properties demised to Henry's parents. He entered the household of Countess Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, in 1491<sup>22</sup> and remained in her service until her death in 1509. Margaret Beaufort was fond of Henry Parker; used him as her personal sewer, carver and cup-bearer at both public and private occasions; married him to her great-niece, Alice St. John; sent him to Oxford and took care of his young family while he studied there.<sup>23</sup> She even paid off his step-father, Sir Edward Howard, with a one-time disbursement of 500 marks "to

redeem Master Parkers lands.” This payment was made in order to prevent Howard from completely gutting the Morley baronial estate which Henry was to inherit.<sup>24</sup> Five hundred marks, approximately £335 was a huge amount of money at the time, approximately £163000 in 2005 pounds<sup>25</sup>, and this can be used as a gauge to measure just how fond Margaret Beaufort was of Henry Parker.

His mother was Alice Lovell, from the baronial Lovell family of Titchmarsh and the heiress of the combined Baronies of Morley and Rhie after the death of her only brother.<sup>26</sup> Henry Parker inherited what remained of the estate and the right to the Lord Morley title in 1518 when his mother died. It appears that the baronial title was allowed to lapse since Henry Parker’s father, who was a courtier of Richard III and not highly favored by the Tudors, was never summoned to Parliament as Lord Morley in right of his wife. It seems likely that the Morley title and barony were revived by Henry VIII for Henry Parker, which suggests he was in the king’s good graces.<sup>27</sup>

As Lord Morley, he held only minor and occasional roles in Henry VIII’s court. In 1520, he attended the king on his visit with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor at Gravelines and was one of four barons who attended Queen Katherine at the Field of Cloth of Gold.<sup>28</sup> In 1523, he was summoned to his first Parliament as Lord Morley, Baron of Rhie, and immediately after the king sent him at the head of a delegation of four to confer the Order of the Garter on Archduke Ferdinand of the Holy Roman Empire. He was appointed to sit on various commissions of peace, tax collection, drainage, etc. in the counties of Essex and Hertfordshire starting in 1530 and continuing for the rest of Henry VIII’s reign.<sup>29</sup>

He was empaneled on the jury for the treason trial of the Duke of Buckingham in 1521 and for all five of the rest of the treason trials by a jury of lords during Henry VIII’s reign. Two of those trials were those of his son-in-law, George Boleyn and George’s sister, Queen Anne Boleyn. Of the six people executed in the fall of Anne Boleyn, Henry Parker had ties to half of them: Anne and George Boleyn, and also Henry Norris, who was Parker’s second cousin through the Lovell bloodline.<sup>30</sup>

Henry Parker had no record of any kind of military service, which as Starkey points out is remarkably odd for any of the English nobility given their collective conceit of being a warrior elite. In the dedication to one of his expositions on the psalms in 1539 Morley wrote he was “unmete to do any bodily service” for his sovereign.<sup>31</sup> Yet his portrait drawn by Dürer in 1523 shows a lean, handsome man with a youthful face for one in his forties. We can only speculate if Morley had some disability that prevented his participation in martial activities. If he did suffer some kind of disability or chronic illness, it could not have been something that would prevent travel, long hours spent studying books, duties in Parliament, sitting on county commissions, and performing ceremonial odd jobs such as carrying the four year old future Queen Elizabeth during the baptism service for the newborn Prince Edward in 1537.

Henry Parker’s identity should not rely on his status as Lady Rochford’s father, for he is actually one of the first of the Tudor men of letters, arguably the first from the Tudor nobility, from the generation before Wyatt and the poet Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. He was first English translator of Plutarch’s *Lives*, decades before any other translator of Plutarch, and also the first to translate Petrarch, producing Petrarch’s popular *Trionfi* in rhyming couplets<sup>32</sup> as a New Year’s gift for Henry VIII.<sup>33</sup> His translation works were so substantial that they are still the subject of academic study today. The printed version of Morley’s translation of the *Trionfi* was the only published complete English text available to the Tudor and Elizabethan world until 1587.<sup>34</sup> Given the predominance of the Petrarchian triumph of virtues motif in Tudor and Elizabethan pageants and masques, the importance of Lord Morley’s translation is greater than most modern readers will realize.<sup>35</sup>

Henry Parker also translated Seneca, Cicero, Erasmus, and Boccaccio among others. In addition, he wrote poetry and original works of religious commentary, one of which is the most quoted primary



source on the life of Margaret Beaufort.<sup>36</sup> While his roles in the Tudor court and government were mostly ancillary and minor, his place in English letters is as significant as it is undeservedly neglected.

He was born in the reign of Edward IV and died in the reign of one of his dearest friends, Queen Mary. He had a ringside seat in the courts of six English Sovereigns – or eight if we include Edward V and Jane Grey. Unlike the Howard and Boleyn factions at court to which he was closely tied, he never lost the favor of any Tudor ruler and died peaceably in his own bed at Morley House in Great Hallingbury in 1556.

Epitaphium huius parciari domini Henrici  
Parker equitis aurati Angliæ domini  
Henricus auratus eques Angliæ domini heri nobilita-  
tis specimen quæ semper in deum opt. max. parvulus ac san-  
guine coniunctos prestanti pietate fuit in armoreu hor-  
monumetum commune sepulchrum hinc esse voluit. Am-  
namq; atq; amie. et parentis utriusq; clarissimæ fami-  
ne doris sine ulla. ut sub hac mole cederetur effert. qui  
heros vivente dicit affirmare licet multo illustrior fuisse  
esse iam erat enim in ceteri nobilitum ætate heluti præci-  
osissima honoru literaru splendore. omniq; virtutum  
genere refulgens. cuius suavissimis manibus opta-  
tis hospes quietem placidissimam  
vixit ann. lxxx. obiit a. d. m. d. lvi. m. e. l. p. obsequi  
bene merito posuit nepos et heres Henricus Parker  
eques auratus Angliæ Dominus

Figure 9: Henry Parker's Memorial Inscription

*Epitaphium praeclari viri Henrici Parkar*  
Epitaph of that excellent man Henry Parker,

*equitis aurati Morlei domini*  
knight, Lord Morley.

*Henricus auratus eques Morlei Domin[us] vere nobilitatis specimen*  
Henry, knight, Lord Morley, (was) a true specimen of nobility

*qua semper in de[us] opt[imus] max[imus]*  
that always (had) towards God Almighty,

*parentes ac sanguine c[on]iunctos praestanti pietate*  
parents and kin, outstanding piety.

*fuit marmore[um] hoc monum[en]tum comune supulchr[um] suis esse uoluit*  
He made this marble tomb as a common grave

*Aui nam[que] at[que] auie*  
for grandfather, grandmother,

*et parentis vtrius[que] clarissima[que] faemine vxoris*  
and both parents (and his) renowned wife

*suae ossa ut sub hac mole c[on]der[en]tur effecit*  
that under this tombstone (lit.: weight) their bones might be placed together (lit.: joined).

*quo heroe viuente vere*  
(That) such a true hero lived (here)

*affirmare licet multo illustrior[em] fuisse essexiam erat enim in c(o)etu*  
is to affirm (that) Essex was rendered more illustrious by the company

*nobilium g[em]ma veluti praeciosissima bonar[um] literar[um] splendor[em] :*  
of (this) noble gem, just as with the most precious bright learning (lit.: good letters),

*omniq[ue] virtutum genere refulgens :*  
every kind of virtue shines.

*cuius suauissimis manibus optabis hospes Quietem placidissimam*  
Will you, passer-by, pray for the repose for these gentle souls

*vixit Ann(os) lxxx obiit A[nno] d[omi]ni M [cccc] lvi m[en]se Nov[em]bri*  
He lived 80 years. He died in the year of our Lord 1556 in the month of November

*bene m[er]iti posuit*  
erected to one (who is) well-deserving

*nepos et heres Henricus Parkar eques auratus Morlej Dominus*  
by grandson and heir Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley



## Alice St. John, wife of Sir Henry Parker, Lord Morley, mother of Lady Rochford

Alice St. John came from a cadet branch of the well-known St. John family, which had its origins in the Lords St. John of Basing in the thirteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Alice's great grandfather was one of the three husbands of Margaret Beauchamp of Bletsoe, and they had several children together, including John St. John, Alice's grandfather. Another of Margaret Beauchamp's husbands was John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset and they had one daughter together before the duke's death: Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII. Hence, John St. John and Margaret Beaufort were half-siblings.

Because of the many children that Margaret Beauchamp bore over three marriages, Alice St. John was either cousin or second cousin, by blood or by marriage, to Lord Zouche, Lord Clifford, Lord Scrope of Bolton, Lord Welles, Viscount Welles, the Earl of Kildare, the Marquis of Dorset, Henry VII and Henry VIII.<sup>38</sup> Not only should this give you an idea of how well connected Alice was, it should also give you a clue about how inbred the English nobility was overall.

Alice St. John was Margaret Beaufort's great niece and Henry VIII's second cousin. She was raised and took service in Margaret Beaufort's household and Countess Margaret had a hand in arranging Alice's wedding to Henry Parker. To give you an indication of how deeply Margaret Beaufort was involved in the matchmaking between Henry Parker and Alice, the £120 for Alice's jointure was sent by the estate of Sir William Parker not to Alice's father but to Countess Margaret.<sup>39</sup>

Alice received a good education for a woman of her era, being able to read and probably write. We know this because Margaret Beaufort left Alice a book in her will.<sup>40</sup> Besides being an attendant to Margaret Beaufort, she also attended Queen Katherine of Aragon at the Cloth of Gold in 1520.<sup>41</sup>

We know nothing about the quality of her marriage or her family life. She bore more than three children to Henry Parker and likely lived the life of a well-connected Tudor noblewoman whose children had promising starts at court. After the execution of her daughter Jane in 1542, she donated part of the cost for a new bell for St. Giles in Hallingbury Morley. Julia Fox in her biography of Lady Rochford fancies that this act may have been a memorial to the dead Jane, Lady Rochford by her mother Alice<sup>42</sup>:

"Lady Morley made an unprecedented gift toward the cost of the bells at St. Giles, Great Hallingbury. John Tonne, who originally came from Sussex but worked extensively in Essex, cast a new bell for the little church. To imagine that Alice Morley thought of Jane every time the bell was rung may be fanciful. Equally, it may be true. And John Tonne's bell, the sole survivor of those early ones, is still there. It rings to this day."

History is silent on Alice in the years between Jane's death in 1542 and her own a decade later.

Epitaphium Alicie Parkar preclarae  
faeminae uxoris Henrici Parkar  
equitis aurati Morlei domini  
En ego Alicia regio sanguine prognata: uxore  
fui quondam Incluti Henrici Parkar equitis aurati  
Morlei domini: per lustrorum fere spacia duodecim  
ac tandem hic requiesco Vixit Ann 66 obiit  
Anno dñi m CCCCLij mense Dec[em]bri: Bene me-  
renti posuit gratissimus maritus Henricus Par-  
kar eques auratus Morlei dominus

Figure 10: Alice St. John's Memorial Inscription

*Epitaphium Alicie Parkar pr(a)eclarae faemine*

Epitaph of Alice Parkar, outstanding woman,

*uxoris Henrici Parkar equitis aurati Morlei domini*

wife of Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley

*En ego Alicia regio sanguine prognata :*

Lo, I, Alice, born of royal blood

*uxor fui quondam Incluti*

was once wife of celebrated

*Henrici Parkar equitis aurati Morlei Domini :*

Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley

*per lustrorum fere spacia duodeci[ma]*

through almost twelve intervals of lustra (1 lustrum = 5 years)

*ac tandem hic requiesco*

and in the end, here I rest

*vixit An[nos] 66 obiit*

She lived 66 years. She died

*Anno d[omini] M CCCCLij mense Dec[em]bri :*

in the year of our Lord 1552 in the month of December.

*Bene merenti posuit*

erected for (one who is) well-deserving

*gratissimus maritus Henricus Parkar eques auratus Morlei Dominus*

by beloved husband Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley

## Sir William Parker, Lord Morley's Father.

William Parker walks onto the pages of history as the Yeoman of the Scullery<sup>43</sup> and a “gentleman of the King’s household”<sup>44</sup> at the court of Edward IV. Other than that, we know nothing about his origins. There were several prominent gentry families surnamed Parker which were active during the latter reign of Edward IV, in Norfolk, Kent, Devon, Derbyshire and the Bowland Fells region of modern Lancashire, but a direct tie to any of these has been impossible to establish. William Parker and his mother Agnes, who is also buried in the Parker-Morley tomb, are a cypher. It is this great gap in William Parker’s origins that provided my original motivation to hunt down the Parker Family memorial inscriptions because I thought they might provide a further clue as to where William and Agnes came from.

What happened after William Parker joined Edward IV’s household is extraordinary: he made one of the great social-climbing marriages of the fifteenth century. This gentry nobody married Alice Lovell. Her father William was Lord Morley by right of his wife, Alianore (or Eleanor) de Morley<sup>45</sup>, heiress to the Morley baronial title and lands.<sup>46</sup> Alice’s uncle was the Baron Lovell of Titchmarsh.<sup>47</sup> Her cousin Francis was the famous Viscount Lovell, Richard III’s Lord Chamberlain. In 1475, when her father died and her brother Henry Lovell, Lord Morley was a minor, several Morley and Lovell properties were demised to William, including Hallingbury Hall in Hallingbury Morley.<sup>48</sup> The income from these properties certainly trumped the income from William’s grant of two tenements and some farm land in Yorkshire<sup>49</sup> plus a possible side job as a ranger of New Forest.<sup>50</sup>

William Parker was knighted by Richard, Duke of Gloucester during the 1482 war with Scotland.<sup>51</sup> When Edward IV died, William was part of his funeral procession. A month later he is present at the coronation of Richard III. Richard III makes him one of his privy councilors and he is one of Richard III’s banner bearers at Bosworth.

The climb from scullery to privy council member in twelve years is an unprecedented rise. His entry-level position at Edward IV’s household was one typically held by upper-middle class gentry<sup>52</sup>, but to go from there to marrying into the baronial nobility is an eyebrow raiser. William’s progression from scullery to king’s confidant is a true-life tale of rags-to riches in an age where such upward transits of society in less than one generation were rare.

While Sir William Parker never again held a court position after Bosworth, his circumstances were not bleak under Henry VII. This is a contrary view to both the academics who imply that William Parker was under a cloud during Henry VII’s reign<sup>53</sup> and also to the Parker family tradition that Sir William was arrested, confined or incarcerated by Henry VII after Bosworth.<sup>54</sup> The Close Rolls of Henry VII record the issuing and receipt of several types of bond by Sir William as early as 1486<sup>55</sup>, which implies that by this time he had recovered quickly from whatever wounds he received at Bosworth, submitted to the new king and received pardon. Both Sir William and his young brother-in-law, Henry Lovell, Lord Morley wisely stayed home during the Lambert Simnel uprising and the Battle of Stoke.

In 1489, Sir William sued the Duke of Suffolk in the Court of the Star Chamber for the illegal 1488-to-1489 seizure of the manors of Hingham and Buxton by the duke’s soldiers and the violent harassment of Sir William’s tenants.<sup>56</sup> Some historians have speculated that the duke’s actions were to enforce the dower rights of Sir William’s sister-in-law, Elizabeth de la Pole, but the timing is wrong if the duke’s actions started in 1488. Elizabeth’s husband died in mid-1489, well after the time that the duke sent armed men to occupy Sir William’s manors.<sup>57</sup>

Bluntly stated, the Duke of Suffolk was a bully, who kept his own private army going even after



Henry VII abolished private liveries. For example, the violence the duke visited on the Pastons is documented throughout their letters and Sir William is not the only person to take the duke to court over his violent appropriation of other peoples' property. The judgment of the Star Chamber is not recorded but since the manors and lands involved were later inherited by Henry Parker, Sir William obviously won his case.

Sir William's financial and legal dealings aren't the actions of a man suffering under the direct displeasure of Henry VII. Rather, it seems that in Henry VII's early reign, the king merely ignored Sir William and Sir William quietly lived the life of an upper-class member of the gentry at Hallingbury Morley – excluding taking the Duke of Suffolk to court.

The year 1491 marks the beginning of open favor of the Parkers by Margaret Beaufort. Sir William's son Henry is taken into her household.<sup>58</sup> This action places the future Lord Morley into the heart of the Early Tudor court in the entourage of the king's mother, a woman whose political influence was eclipsed only by that of the king himself.

Sir William fell subject to a bout of insanity in 1493, the precise nature of which is unknown.<sup>59</sup> It appears he had recovered by 1496 when he was one of twenty-five knights who served at the feast that Margaret Beaufort gave for the Bishop of Lincoln in honor of his elevation, a dinner attended by Lord Hastings and Cecily Plantagenet, sister to the queen. This is the dinner that Henry Parker described so vividly in his *Account of the Miracles of the Blessed Sacrament* mentioned earlier.<sup>60</sup>

The last mentions of Sir William note that he again fell subject to insanity in 1502. The king "noted courses to be taken for the discharge" of Sir William's debts in 1503.<sup>61</sup> Sir William died soon after, within the year.<sup>62</sup> His memorial inscription is clear that he died by some violent act whose nature is not recorded.

Epitaphium Gulielmi parkar parclari  
equitis aurei aarlei domini  
en qui secum procedis mente: parumper  
Hopes fite gradum: herbag: paucis lege  
Hic iaceo, ut cerma, Gulielmus nomine parkar  
Eques preclaris nobilitatus suis  
Dum huius huius multis percharis amicis  
Si tamen hen peru: quantu inimicis  
Conquerar an taceam: metus ut tulerit olim  
Fortuna sustinui dum stetit illa rota  
Nil querar o hopes: pateant mihi lumina celi  
Accedant votis fac tua nota precor:  
Vixit Ann 56 obiit Ann 1520 Patri Benemerenti  
gratissimus filius Henricus parkar eques  
aureatus aarlei domini posuit

Figure 11: Sir William Parker's Memorial Inscriptions

*Epitaphium Gulielmi Parkar praeclari equitis aurati Morlei Domini*  
The Epitaph of William Parkar, noble Knight, Lord Morley

*En qui segura procedis mente :*  
You who passes by, free of care,

*parumper Hospes siste gradum :*  
for a little while, Stranger, stop here (lit: stay your foot)

*verbaq[ue] pauca lege*  
read (these) few words

*Hic iaceo ut cernis Gulihelmi nomine Parkar*  
Here I lie, as you can see, (by the) name William Parker

*Eques praeclaris nobilitatus auis*  
Noble knight, renown(ed) ancestor

*Dum vixi, vixi multis percharus amicis*  
While I lived, I lived dear to many friends

*Vi tamen heu perij*  
however by violence alas I perished :

*quant[um] inimicitie Conquerar an taceam :*  
Shall I complain of great enmity or (of) nothing

*mec[um]q[ue] ut luserit olim Fortuna*  
in that Fortuna played with me once

*Instabili dum stetit illa rota?*  
while she stood at her fickle wheel?

*Nil querar, o hospes; pateant mihi limina caeli*  
Protest not, O Stranger; I open the doors of heaven

*Accedant votis fac tua uota precor.*  
Come make intercession (for me) I ask your prayers

*Vixit An[nos] 56 obiit An[no] 1520.*  
He lived 56 years. He died in the year 1520

*Patri Benemer[en]ti*  
to the well-deserving father,

*gratissimus filius Henricus Parkar eques auratus Morlei Dominus posuit*  
erected by (his) beloved son Henry Parker Knight Lord Morley

## Alice Lovell, wife of Sir William Parker

Alice Lovell may have been born in 1458 since her age at death was 60 as stated on her memorial plaque. She probably spent time as a child at the baronial manors of Hallingbury Hall, Morley Hall and Hockering<sup>63</sup>; at Lovell Court in London, and at her grandmother's house in Norwich.<sup>64</sup> Alice obviously felt some affection for the market town of Hingham, the seat of the ancient Barony of Rhie, since she desired to be buried there when she died in 1518.<sup>65</sup> Her mother Alianore de Morley also considered Hingham to be an important residence for the Lords Morley since she too was buried there. The de Morleys and their descendents, including Alice's mother, Alice herself, and Alice's son Henry held the advowson of St. Andrew's, the church in Hingham, and donated many generous gifts of money and goods.<sup>66</sup>

Alice married the nobody yeoman of the king, William Parker, in 1475 or 1476. Her father died on July 23, 1475<sup>67</sup>, and her mother died less than a month later on August 20.<sup>68</sup> Since both parents died relatively young during the Summer, it is a distinct possibility that they both died of the plague or some other epidemic sickness. Whether her parents were alive when she and William married is unclear. Regardless of what Alice Lovell's parents may have thought of William Parker, the marriage of William and Alice could not have happened without the approval of the king, which implies that Edward IV must have been fond of his yeoman William. At the time of their marriage or shortly after, the newlywed couple was given the use and income<sup>69</sup> of the lands and manors of Hallingbury Morley, Hingham, Buxton, Walkern, and the Hundred of Forehoe in 1476.<sup>70</sup> The demised lands and manors were detached by the king from the estate of Alice's minor brother Henry Lovell, Lord Morley, since the king had control over Henry's wardship at the time. This was one of the first acts by various parties in the four decade-long dismantling of the Morley-Lovell baronial properties inherited by Alice's brother.

Alice is mostly invisible in the historical record. Since the manor and church records<sup>71</sup> in Great Hallingbury show the Parkers active in the life of the manor, we may infer that Alice Lovell and her family spent a lot of time at the Hallingbury Morley estate in the old nine-room Hallingbury Hall with its moat. We know she had at least three children with Sir William. After Sir William died, Alice married Sir Edward Howard in 1505.<sup>72</sup> This was not a good move on Alice's part since Howard continued the dismantling of the once-great Morley-Lovell inheritance by the sale of Walkern in 1506<sup>73</sup>, though his actions were likely precipitated by Henry VII's rapacious demands for benevolences and bonds from Howard.<sup>74</sup> The sale of Walkern may have been the triggering event behind Margaret Beaufort's 500 mark pay-off to Howard in order to preserve what was left of Henry Parker's inheritance.

Howard was a famous sailor and was appointed Admiral of England by the young Henry VIII in 1512. He died in battle off the coast of France during Henry's first war with France in 1513.<sup>75</sup> In his will, he left Morley Hall in Hingham to Alice to use for the remainder of her life.<sup>76</sup> She died in 1518 and was buried in St. Andrew's in Hingham according to her wishes. Her son Henry disregarded those wishes when he moved her remains to St. Giles.



Epitaphium Matris Henrici Parkar  
equitis aurati Morlei Domini  
Nobilis heu tristi Concessit femina fato  
cuius in hoc tumulo conuicta membra iacet  
Morlei dico Domina: Cui Alicia nomen  
A Louello fuit: uiuat ubiq; precor  
In quibus emittit claris: et Stemmata clara nitet  
Aurea nunc inter Sydera clara nitet  
Corpus terra tenet: sed spiritus alta polorum  
Renna tenet fatis: hoc deus ipse uelit  
Dixit Ann. G. obiit Anno 1528 Matris bene-  
merenti posuit filius gratissimus Henricus  
Parkar eques auratus Morlei Dominus

Figure 12: Alice Lovell, Lady Morley's Memorial Inscription

*Epitaphium Matris Henrici Parkar equitis aurati Morlei Domini*  
Epitaph of the mother of Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley

*Nobilis heu tristi Concessit femina fato Cuius*  
Alas! Say what renowned woman departs who

*in hoc tumulo conju(nc)ta mem[br]a iacent*  
in this tomb are gathered (lit.: cast together) her remains (lit.: limbs)

*Morlei dico Domin[am] :*  
I speak of Lady Morley

*Cui Alicia nomen a Louello fuit :*  
who by that name Alice was from the Lovells

*uiuat ubi[que] precor*  
I pray everywhere she would live forever (lit.: continues to live)

*M[or]ibus entuit claris :*  
She was distinguished by her excellent manner

*et Stemmata claro Aurea*  
and excellent golden pedigree

*nunc inter Sydera clara nitet*  
now betwixt the bright constellations she will shine

*Corpus terra tenet :*  
the earth possesses her body

*sed spiritus alta polor[us] Regna tenet felix:*  
even as her happy spirit possesses the lofty heavenly kingdom

*hoc deus ipse nelit*  
this God himself wills

*Vixit An[nos] 60 obiit Anno 1528*  
She lived 60 years. She died in the year 1528.

*Matri benemerenti posuit filius gratissimus*  
erected to a well-deserving mother by a beloved son

*Henricus Parkar equies auratius Morlej Dominus*  
Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley

## Elizabeth de la Pole, Lady Morley, Henry Parker's Aunt

Elizabeth de la Pole was born around 1468.<sup>77</sup> Her mother was Elizabeth Plantagenet, the sister of Edward IV and Richard III. Her father was John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. Her brother John, Earl of Lincoln was one of the supporters of Lambert Simnel and died at the Battle of Stoke fighting against Henry VII in 1487.<sup>78</sup>

Elizabeth married Henry Lovell, Lord Morley in Wingfield, Suffolk. They were both in their teens when they married around 1482. The match was likely arranged by Elizabeth's father since Henry Lovell was the ward of the Duke of Suffolk in the last years of Edward IV's reign.<sup>79</sup> Even without the assets that Edward IV and other guardians had nibbled off the Morley-Lovell inheritance, Henry's estate was still substantial. His baronial inheritance made him a desirable son-in-law for the duke. It is worth mentioning that Henry was not the first Lovell to be a ward of the Duke of Suffolk: Francis Lovell, Richard of Gloucester's friend and Henry's cousin was also one of the duke's wards.

Lord Morley was at Sheriff Hutton when the children of Edward IV were in custody there in 1485.<sup>80</sup> This opens up the possibility that his wife Elizabeth was also there with her husband, Lord Morley. Either way, it does show that there was another potential tie between

Henry VII's family and the extended Morley family, since Henry Parker's mother was the sister-in-law to the cousin of Queen Elizabeth of York. Henry Lovell remained a ward of John de la Pole into the reign of Henry VII, until February 5, 1489 when he was granted a *special livery* by Henry VII to inherit while he was still a minor.<sup>81</sup> It appears as if Henry's father-in-law abused Henry's property since soon after Henry came into his inheritance, he had to settle Hingham, Buxton, and the Hundred of Forehoe on trustees for the discharge of his debts in April, 1489. It is worth noting that one of those trustees was Sir William Boleyn.<sup>82</sup> It turns out that the debt settlement was illegal because it was done without the knowledge and approval of the king for lands held in fealty to the king. This illegal enfeoffment was discovered at the inquest after Henry's death but the king decided to pardon the trustees and had them pay a fine of a half a mark.<sup>83</sup>

Henry Lovell died in battle in Brittany in June, 1489, leaving Elizabeth a widow. He was killed by a cannon ball and was buried in Calais. One of the executors of his will was again Sir William Boleyn,

Anne Boleyn's grandfather.<sup>84</sup> We see Elizabeth next at a hearing in November, 1489 with Sir William and Lady Alice, in order to assign Elizabeth's jointure, involving properties in seven counties.<sup>85</sup> Carving off seven properties from the baronial estate was hardly trivial and represent another bite out of the dwindling Morley inheritance.

Elizabeth may be the Lady Morley mentioned in one of the Paston letters. Margery Paston reported that she consulted Lady Morley on what activities were appropriate for Christmas celebrations during a period of mourning.<sup>86</sup> She asked Lady Morley because the latter had already experienced a Christmas while still in the mourning period for her late husband. The letter has an estimated date of 1484 which is problematic since Elizabeth de la Pole's husband did not die until 1489. Any date after 1484 is also troublesome since Margaret Paston died in 1484. The letter can not refer to the previous Lady Morley, Alianore de Morley, because she died in the Summer of 1475 only a month after her husband. The identity of Lady Morley in the Paston letter is a puzzle though Elizabeth de la Pole is a close match.

According to her memorial inscription, Elizabeth never remarried. Any Morley or Lovell lands that were held by tail male reverted to the Crown when Henry died. Henry Lovell's sister, Alice, inherited the rump of the barony.<sup>87</sup>

Elizabeth appears to have lived the rest of her life quietly. She must have spent enough time with the rest of the Morley-Parker clan that she was cherished by her nephew Henry who buried her in his family tomb along with himself, his wife, his parents and his grandmother.

**Epitaphium Elizabethae de la pole Ducis  
Suthfolcie filiae**  
Elizabetha ducis Suthfolcie filia atq; Indiscreti viri Henrici  
Tobiel moxiei domini huius tanto marito amore prolapuebatur;  
ut in prelio contra Gallos ictu pule aeneq; maximo de secun  
dis impetis ut cogitaret, munusq; postea adduci potuit sed  
florenti etate, ceponisq; non mediocri pulchritudine ad  
mortem usq; vidua permanere noluit: Alijs mulierib;  
rarellimū castitatis exemplū dedit an. 51 obiit anno  
1480: Bene merenti posuit Henricus Parker nepos  
reges auratus, moxiei dominus.

Figure 13: Elizabeth de la Pole's Memorial Inscription



*Epitaphium Elysabetæ De lapole Ducis Suthfolcie filia*  
Epitaph of Elizabeth de la Pole, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk

*Elysabetha Ducis Suthfolcie filia at[que]*  
Elizabeth, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk and

*Inclyti viri Henrici Lovell M[or]lei Domini uxor tanto*  
the only wife of the celebrated Henry Lovell, Lord Morley,

*marit[um] am[or]e prosequabatur*  
her love (was) so abiding

*ut in prælio contra Gallos ictu pilæ aneæ m[or]tuo*  
that (with) his death in battle against the French from a cannon ball strike  
(lit. “bronze ball blow”)

*[de] secundis nupcijs ut cogitaret numqu[am] postea adduci potuit*  
she could not be brought to think of a second marriage afterward

*sed fl[or]enti ætate c[or]poris[que] non mediocri pulchritudine*  
but rather despite the prime of life and an uncommon beauty,

*ad m[or]tem us[que] vidua permanere uoluit :*  
all the way up to death she wished to remain a widow

*alijs mulieri[bus] rarissim[um] castitatis exempl[um]*  
a rare example of chastity for other women

*vixit an[nos] 51 obiit [an]no 1480*  
she lived 51 years she died in the year 1480

*Bene merenti posuit*  
Erected to one (who is) well-deserving

*Henricus Parkar nepos<sup>88</sup> æques auratus Morlei Dominus.*  
by nephew Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley

## Agnes Parker, Lord Morley's Paternal Grandmother

All we know about Agnes Parker is written on her memorial plaque: she lived a difficult life full of trouble and ill fortune. The inscription text is a tease for it gives us no details. We might infer that she lived with the Parker family at Hallingbury Morley toward the end of her life since she was buried there.

Agnes Parker Auie charissime Hen-  
rici parker equitis aurati morley dñi  
vixi equidem: et semper uarijs agitata procellis  
fortune: et uarijs undiq; pressa malis  
Nunc quia mors uenit: percellit gaudia pectus  
Cumq; alijs mors sit aspera: uita mihi est  
Agnes dicebar uiuens: nūc altra subito  
celesti ut agno perfruar et uideam  
hic me criminibus purgabit: cordida queq;  
auferet: hic requiem: et bona cuncta dabit  
Vixit Ann: 70 Obijt Anno 1440 Auie bene-  
merenti gratissimus nepos posuit Henricus  
Parker equis auratus morley Dominus 2

Figure 14: Agnes Parker's Memorial Inscription

*Agnesis Parkar Auie charissime*

Agnes Parker beloved grandmother

*Henrici Parkar equitis aurati Morley [domini]*

of Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley

*vixi equidem : aet semper uarijs agitata procellis*

Verily I lived, but always with various troubles, storms

*fortune : et uarijs undi[que] pressa malis*

of fortune, and oppressed by evils all around (me)

*Nunc quia mors uenit : percell[un]t gaudia pectus*

now that death comes, joys fill my breast

*Cum[que] alijs mors sit aspera :*  
While death would be harsh to others,

*uita mihi est*  
for me it is life.

*Agnes dicebar uiuens*  
I was called Agnes (when) living

*n[un]c astra subibo celesti*  
now I shall enter the stars of heaven

*ut agno perfruar et uideam hic me*  
that I may see and be fulfilled by the Lamb (of God)

*criminibus purgabit : sordida qu[ae][que] Auferet*  
He will free me of sins, (my) stains he will remove

*hic requiem : et bona cuncta [da]bit*  
Here he will provide me rest and all good things.

*Vixit an[nos] : 70 obiit 1440*  
She lived 70 years. She died in the year 1440.

*Auie bene merenti*  
To a well-deserving grandmother

*gratissimus nepos posuit*  
erected by a beloved descendent

*Henricus Parkar equis auratus Morlej Dominus*  
Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley



## A Confusion of Dates

Most modern scholars who study Lord Morley agree: the dates on the memorial plaques are off. For example, the 1528 death date for Alice Lovell can't be correct since her will was proved in 1518. The 1520 death date for Sir William Parker can't be right since his widow Alice was remarried by 1505. The death date of 1480 for Elizabeth de la Pole is nine years before we find her in the hearing in 1489 to settle her jointure.

If Sir William Parker was really 56 when he died around 1504, then he was born sometime around 1448. His approximate birth date presents a problem for his mother Agnes since her death date on her memorial plaque is 1440, eight years before she gave birth to Sir William.

Since I have found no contradictory information so far for Alice St. John, I will assume that her age and death date are correct, especially since they appear reasonable. As already mentioned, the 1476 birth date for Henry Parker, Lord Morley based on his memorial plaque may be five years too early. The alternative 1481 birth date is good only if: 1) the dinner described in *The Account of the Miracles of the Sacrament* was really the celebration feast for the new Bishop of Lincoln, and 2) Henry Parker really was 15 years old at the time. What isn't discussed by the present-day scholars is the reliability of Henry Parker as a source. When Henry Parker wrote *The Account of the Miracles of the Sacrament*, he was an old man two years from death. It was his last work. Given his age, a fading memory can not be discounted.

Starkey made a point that Henry would not have said he was fifteen if he had really been twenty at the Bishop of Lincoln's feast. But what if Henry exaggerated his age downwards? After all, leading twenty-five knights to serve a feast sounds a lot more impressive if he said he was fifteen rather than twenty. Alternatively, what if he mixed up memories of two different feasts? He was Margaret Beaufort's sewer and cup bearer for almost two decades and he probably saw a lot of formal celebratory feasts. It wouldn't be at all surprising if he mixed up details when he was writing as an old man remembering events more than 50 years in the past. The point I would like to make here is that we need to add a third assumption if we are to believe the 1481 birth date: that Henry Parker remembered and related the event correctly, which is not a given for an elderly man.

It's obvious that Henry Parker had to be a source of some or most of the information used on the memorial plaques. The potential problem of an old man's memory has to be considered when looking at the errors in the dates. But even if Henry Parker's memory was still sharp in the last few years of his life, he himself may have believed his information was correct even if it wasn't. The parish register system didn't exist before the last decade of Henry VIII's reign so unless a date was written down somewhere, Henry Parker's own memory of ages and death dates may have been flawed.

There's still another factor that needs to be considered: it might have been Henry's grandson who was responsible for providing some of the dates on the memorial plaques. When Henry Parker died, his son Henry was already dead. His successor to the barony was his grandson, the third Henry Parker. What sort of information did the grandson have on the six people in the Parker-Morley tomb? Every person buried in that tomb was born before the parish register system was mandated by law in 1538. Four of them died before 1538 and their death dates are all incorrect as we've just discussed. There is really only one date on the memorial inscriptions that we can take at face value: the death date and age of Alice St. John.

There were probably no written records on the birth dates of any of the six in the tomb. For death dates, some help can come from the dates for proving wills as we saw for Alice Lovell; but that doesn't help in the case of someone like Agnes Parker who probably didn't own enough property to need a will. It seems likely that most of the dates and ages on the memorial inscriptions were based on someone's memory or guess, and not on a written record.

Deceased	Death from Tomb	Age on Tomb	Calculated Birth from Tomb	Death from Other Sources	Birth from Other Sources	Erected By
Henry Parker	MCCCCCLVI (1556)	LXXX (80)	1476	1556	No later than 1481	grandson
Alice St. John	MCCCCCLII (1552)	66	1486			husband
William Parker	1520	56	1464	~1504		son
Alice Lovell	1528	60	1468	~1518		son
Elizabeth de la Pole	1480	51	1429		1468	nephew
Agnes Parker	1440	70	1370			grandson

**Table 1:** The Provenance of the Memorial Plaques

Table 1 summarizes the death dates and ages of the six people buried in the Morley-Parker tomb. Roman numerals are used only three times: for Henry Parker's death date and age and for Alice St. John's death date. All other numbers on the memorial plaques have modern forms and most of them are quite crude in appearance. Needless to say, this is unusual if not unique for memorial brasses.

Going back to the inscriptions themselves, we find that most of the modern numerals lack proportional spacing and fail to fill their space. This strongly suggests that the craftsman who made the plaques left room for dates and ages to be filled in later. When we compare the quadratus letter forms and the Roman numerals with the crude modern numbers on the plaques, it appears that a second less-skilled pair of hands filled in dates and ages. We do not know who made the plaques nor do we know who filled in the blank spaces with those clumsy-looking modern numbers. We also do not know for certain when the plaques were made nor when the dates and ages were added; however, we can make some intelligent estimates.

Five of the plaques credit Henry Parker, Lord Morley with their creation. His grandson and heir takes the credit for Lord Morley's plaque. We can probably take this information at face value. My working hypothesis is that Lord Morley commissioned five of the memorial plaques while he was still alive, providing the Latin texts himself. The Latin of the epitaphs is classical with literary allusions to Virgil ("ad astra"), Martial ("vivat precor"), and others – something which is consistent with Lord Morley's deep and precocious scholarship. If this is the case, then leaving blanks for dates and ages to be added later is hard to explain since Lord

Morley was more likely to know this information than any of his descendents. I believe the plaque for Lord Morley was commissioned after Morley's death by his grandson, as stated on the plaque itself. Its seamless use of Roman numerals for the death date as part of the text without a break or gap argues that the letters were crafted by just one person at one time. I would like to think that the Latin text for Lord Morley was written by his grandson and not by Lord Morley himself; otherwise we must attribute the embarrassing sin of self-aggrandizement to Lord Morley for writing his own epitaph. Lord Morley's inscription text is the longest of the six plaques; it is also the neatest and lacks the inconsistent indentation ugliness of the other plaques.

In appearance, the plaque for Alice St. John is comparable to Lord Morley's. It too has neat and consistent indentation. It also has a death date in Roman numerals without a gap or break, suggesting it too was crafted by one person at one time. The crude modern "66" for Alice's age at death is notably out of place and jarring to the eye. It is pushing belief farther than it should go to attribute this ugly age-at-death to the same craftsman who inscribed the Roman numeral death date so seamlessly. While it is difficult to suppose that Lord Morley did not know the age of his own wife when she died, the out-of-place appearance of the crude "66" suggests strongly that the age was left blank and added later by a less skilled pair of hands.

Unless additional evidence on the provenance of these plaques turns up, there is little more we can say about them. The incorrect ages and death dates leaves us wary of taking the information on the plaques at face value. Yet, the inscriptions are the only substantial sources to date on the lives of Agnes Parker and Elizabeth de la Pole, and on Sir William Parker's mysterious violent death. They leave us with more questions than they answer.

What the plaques do tell us is something about Henry Parker, Lord Morley's character. Assuming that he wrote the epitaphs, Lord Morley obviously revered his elders but that reverence is tinted with blatant pride and some thoughtless disregard. Morley's mother, Alice Lovell, wished to be buried in chancel of the large and stately St. Andrew's Church in Hingham, Norfolk, and left £26 18s. 4d. for a memorial to be placed over her resting place.<sup>89</sup> St. Andrew's is the resting place for many of the de Morley family, including a large late Gothic carved-stone family tomb. Hingham was the home of the de Morleys and the seat of their barony for over 300 years; Alice Lovell obviously had strong ties to it. She wanted to be buried with her illustrious de Morley ancestors and her son disregarded this by moving her remains to St. Giles. Morley had more regard for the family tomb he built in St. Giles than for his mother's wishes. The mentions of royal blood for his wife and the great virtues of the widowed Elizabeth de la Pole show Morley's pride in being related to them, even if it was only by marriage ties.

The most conspicuous evidence of Morley's pride is the beginning and end of every inscriptions, where all the other occupants of the tomb are conspicuously labeled by their relationship to him on the very first line, and by the notice that 5 of the 6 plaques were erected by him. There is something heavy-handed about this inescapable repetition of "Henry Parker, knight, Lord Morley" twelve times. This boasting shows up not just on the memorial plaques but also in his writings, where he brags in the *Account of the Miracles of the Sacrament* that at just the young age of 15, he *led* twenty-five knights, including his own father, in the serving of Margaret Beaufort's grand feast.

I have to wonder if Lord Morley's overwrought pride masks an insecurity in the man. It's almost as if he's jumping up and down yelling "look at me, look at me, I'm a knight, a baron, a man with ties to royalty!" He was never given an important position at court, but rather was thrown crumbs like carrying the bastardized Elizabeth at her brother Prince Edward's christening or sitting on county commissions of peace. His lack of affluence and his income from his gutted barony must have been embarrassing to him and the king himself made up the difference for his daughter Jane's jointure. For some reason, he was unable to do military service and therefore could never measure up to his warrior father. Was Lord Morley's retreat into scholarship a compensation for his lack of prowess? He was a spectator for all the important events of the Tudor court but there are hints he dreamed of high office and suffered from unfulfilled ambitions.<sup>90</sup> Was his bragging about his role as Margaret Beaufort's sewer and alluding to his ties to the royal family in the memorial inscriptions attempts to show the world he too had worth?

I believe Lord Morley's family tomb and its memorial inscriptions show us more about his pride and possibly his insecurities than they do about the lives of the five other people buried with him.



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- 5 Ibid.
- 6 'Great Hallingbury,' in An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Essex, Volume 2, Central and South west. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1921, pp. 93-97. British History Online, <http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/rchme/essex/vol2/pp93-97>.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 This is my conclusion based on several lines of evidence that the Parker family was not as affluent as their social equals in the nobility until after Jane Parker's marriage to George Boleyn. For example, between 1489 and 1524, Henry VII, his mother Countess Margaret Beaufort and Henry VIII all stepped in on different occasions with money and other remedies to help preserve the baronial estate when the family could not meet financial obligations. Based on this, I believe that the grand Tudor mansion of Morley Hall could not have been built during this period of extended financial constriction. An added consideration is that Henry Parker, Lord Morley is the likely builder of Morley Hall but he did not gain complete control of his inheritance until after nine years of his step-father's abuse of the Morley properties. After this, he was not affluent for one of his noble status, given that his income was only £ 233 as late as 1524. Even if he had the money to begin building at some earlier date, it is unlikely that his daughter Jane would have been able to spend any significant time in the new manor before she began her career at court in 1522. In fact, further circumstances argue against the construction of Morley House before 1521 since Henry Parker leased Mark Hall in Latton, Essex as a residence in this year, an action that makes no sense if a newly-built Morley House existed at that time.
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- 65 Ibid.
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- 68 Blomefield, Volume 2, pp. 244-445.
- 69 The language used here is "demised," which means that the recipients were given the use but not the ownership of these assets for a time, which was usually several years and often for a lifetime. At the end of the demise period, control of the assets reverted to the owner.
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- 87 Simon, pp. 79-80.
- 88 While I have tried to avoid making comments on features of the Latin used in the inscriptions, I must make an exception here. Nepos, translated here as nephew, is given in most dictionaries available to students of Latin as grandson; however, it has an additional meaning of nephew. See the nepos entry from the Lewis and Short lexicon entry from the Tufts University Latin Word Study Tool at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=nepos&la=la#lexicon>
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