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# Memories of the House of Este in England

The Royal House of Windsor, in their veins runs the blood of  
the oldest Italian Dynasty

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(George, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, Prince-Elector of Hanover, Duke of Brunswick. ca. 1714, the year of his succession, by Sir Godfrey Kneller)

## Memories of the House of Este in England

The Este Royal Family still reigns, and with the world's most famous monarchy. It reigns under another name, because now is called Windsor. In their veins, however, runs the blood of the oldest Italian Dynasty. Among the many states of late medieval Italy, one stands out for its unfamiliarity to an English audience and for its neglect in historical research: that of the Este family, lords (later Dukes) of the cities of Ferrara, Modena and Reggio in northern Italy.

Welf IV d'Este, son of Alberto Azzo II, moved to Germany, first to Carinthia and then to Bavaria, giving rise to one of the most important families in European history, the Guelphs. This in turn ultimately led to the ascension to the English throne in 1714 with George I of England.

The Este constituted, with the Savoy, the longest Italian family dynastic among the various lordships that from the Middle Ages to the *Risorgimento* (The Resurgence) dominated the small states that made up the boot of Italy controlled for long periods a portion that practically reached from the Adriatic Sea to the Tyrrhenian Sea until the Republic of Lucca, acting as cushion between the states of the Church and those in the north, Venice, Mantua and Milan.

The states of Este were obliged passage for any army that wanted to pass from north to south or vice versa, and of course also controlled businesses and duties.

This simple fact gives the idea of the importance that they had, and yet news about them, even in the most prestigious Internet sites, are rare and mainly addressed to individual characters, has been written more about Lucrezia Borgia than of the family of what Este was part and its more than 1000 years of this dynasty.

House of Este, princely family of Lombard origin that played a great part in the history of medieval and Renaissance Italy. It first came to the front in the wars between the Guelfs and Ghibellines during the 13th century. As leaders of the segment Guelfs, Estensi princes received at different times Ferrara, Modena, Reggio, and other fiefs and territories. Members of the family ruled in Ferrara from the 13th through 16th century and in Modena and Reggio from the later Middle Ages to the end of the 18th century.

The House of Este full of suggestions, the oldest Italian family, the beautiful patrons of the arts, the protectors of artists and poets, gentlemen of the most important cities in northern Italy, relatives of the most prestigious races of Europe (Anjou, Aragon, Hapsburg, Bourbon, Savoy) and the Houses of the Peninsula that with their name evoked history, art, poems and legends (Borgia, Carrara, Farnese,

Gonzaga, Malatesta, Doctors, Pico, Pepoli, Sforza, and even relatives of the high Ludovico Ariosto)...could they stay away from the memories of the British? Maria Beatrice d'Este, daughter of Alfonso IV and Laura Martinozzi, niece of Cardinal Mazarin, would become the wife of James Stuart and the Catholic Queen of England, for three years, supplanted following the landing of William of Orange and forced to be the queen Jacobite exile, secretly loved and remembered by the followers of the Stuart dynasty.

An episode extremely sympathetic and meaningful of affection of the British Royal Family for Este is the story that has been handed down in the family of barons East of Calcutta (relatives of the barons of East Hall Place). A descendant of Captain John East who was among the adventurers who acquired Jamaica to the British Crown, founded in the large Caribbean island an extraordinary garden that merited a description of Bryan Edwards in his History of Jamaica and was called with the suggestive name of "Hortus Eastensis" (Hortus Eastensis: or, a catalogue of exotic plants cultivated in the botanic garden, in the mountains of Liguanea, in the Island of Jamaica. To which are added their English names, native places of growth, by whom introduced, and, as far as can be ascertained, the epoch of their introduction, &c. &c.). The King James I, talking to another East of the same family, a gentleman of his court and to him very dear, joking assuming that the spelling of the last name could also bring the courtier of Eastensis Modena of which he had the blood.

But still in the early eighteenth century, the memory Este won two characters of the royal family. Two people who were living on the edge, it is true; but still are mentioned by Burke, and cousins who were in the first degree of Queen Victoria. Frederick Augustus Hanover, Duke of Sussex and Earl of Inverness, son of King George III, in fact married in 1793, without sovereign permission, Lady Augusta de Ameland, daughter of John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, by whom he had two children. The male-Sir Augustus Frederick, colonel in the British army, he became ill with multiple sclerosis still young but he was also very known for being an active defender of the Aborigines against colonial oppression. The daughter Augusta married in 1845 Sir Thomas Wilde, known jurist and Member of Parliament, later became Lord Chancellor and Lord Truro, Baron Bowes. Both, unable to join officially the British royal family took the surname of Este, in memory of their lineage of origin and thus being able to bring in some other way, a real last name.

And perhaps the periodic presence of a prince of Austria Este on Italian soil (Prince Amedeo of Belgium, Archduke of Austria-Este born 21 February 1986, a member of the Belgian Royal Family. He is the heir to the headship of the House of Austria-Este, a cadet branch of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, and is sixth in line to the throne of Belgium). Does it not turn on suggestions today and hopes in many Monarchists and many Italians, tired aristocracy parliamentary-televised?

## **The House of Windsor**

The House of Windsor is the royal house of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms. It was founded by King George V by royal proclamation on 17 July 1917, when he changed the name of the British Royal Family from the German Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (a branch of the House of Wettin) to the English Windsor, due to the anti-German sentiment in the British Empire during World War I. The most prominent member of the House of Windsor is its head, Queen Elizabeth II, who is the reigning monarch of 16 Commonwealth realms.

Dynasties throughout the world have traditionally been reckoned patrilineal, most famously under the Frankish Salic law, with succession through a daughter (when permitted) considered establishing a new dynasty in her husband's ruling house. However, some states in North America and Africa, such as Christian Nubia, determined descent matrilineal, while male rulers have at other times adopted the name of their wife or mother's dynasty when coming into their inheritance: examples include the Dutch House of Orange, the Georgian Bagrationi, and Habsburg-Lorraine.

The House of Este hence gave Great Britain and the United Kingdom the "Hanoverian monarchs" (1714–1901).

## **THE ROYAL FAMILIES OF ENGLAND**

The obscurity in which antiquity has involved the early history of nations can only be, in a slight degree, cleared up by tracing the origin of the families that maintained the continued rule over them. By the combined efforts and researches of Muratori and Leibnitz, the ancestry of the Guelphs has been derived from the princely race of Este; and Gibbon continues the line from that illustrious house, though the dark ages, up to Charlemagne. "The genuine masculine descent of the Princes of Brunswick," says that eloquent writer, "must be explored beyond the Alps: the venerable tree which has since overshadowed Germany and Britain was planted in the Italian soil. As far as our sight can reach, we discern the first founders of the race in the Marquesses of Este, of Liguria, and, perhaps, of Tuscany. In the eleventh century, the primitive stem was divided into two branches; the elder migrated to the Banks of the Danube and the Elbe; the younger more humbly adhered to the neighborhood of the Adriatic: the Dukes of Brunswick and the Kings of Great Britain are the descendants of the first; the Dukes of Ferrara and Modena were the offspring of the second.

In the 11th century, CUNIGUNDA, sister and heiress of Guelph, Duke of Lower Bavaria, Count of Altdorf, married Azzo, MARQUESS OF ESTE, representative of his illustrious house, a nobleman, whose character shines conspicuously through

the gloom of the age in which he lived. This alliance was productive of a son, who received at his baptism the name of GUELPH, to revive and perpetuate the memory of his uncle, his grandfather, and his first progenitors on the maternal side. After the death of Cunigunda, Azzo wedded Garzenda and heir of Hugh, Count of Maine, and was, by her, father of a son, Fulk, the acknowledged parent of the Dukes of Ferrara and Modena. The Marquess of Este d. in 1097, aged upwards of a hundred years.

## **House of Welf**

The House of Welf (also rendered as Guelf or Guelph) was a European dynasty that has included many German and British monarchs from the 11th to 20th century and Emperor Ivan VI of Russia in the 18th century.

House of Welf (Guelf or Guelph) Country Germany, Italy, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Ancestral House of Este Titles Duke of Bavaria Duke of Saxony Duke of Spoleto Margrave of Tuscany Count Palatine of the Rhine King of the Romans Holy Roman Emperor Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg Prince of Lüneburg Prince of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel Elector of Hanover King of Hanover Duke of Brunswick King of Great Britain Emperor of Russia King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Empress of India Founder Welf I, Duke of Bavaria Final sovereign Ernest Augustus, Duke of Brunswick Current head Ernst August V, Prince of Hanover Founding 11th century Dissolution 1918 (in Germany); 1901 (in UK and India) Cadet branches House of Hanover The possessions of the Guelfs in the days of Henry the Lion.

The House of Welf is the older branch of the House of Este, a dynasty whose earliest known members lived in Lombardy in the 9th century. For this reason, it is sometimes also called Welf-Este. The first member of this branch was Welf IV; he inherited the property of the Elder House of Welf when his maternal uncle Welf, Duke of Carinthia, died in 1055. In 1070, Welf IV became duke of Bavaria. Welf V married Countess Matilda of Tuscany who died childless and left him her possessions, including Tuscany, Ferrara, Modena, Mantua, and Reggio, which played a role in the Investiture controversy.

Since the Welf dynasty sided with the Pope in this controversy, partisans of the Pope came to be known in Italy as "Guelphs". Bavaria and Saxony Henry the Black, duke of Bavaria from 1120–1126, was the first of the three dukes of the Welf dynasty carrying the same name. His son, Henry the Proud was the son-in-law and heir of Emperor Lothair of Supplinburg and became also Saxon duke after Lothair's death. Henry the Proud was then the favored candidate in the imperial election against Conrad III of the Hohenstaufen. But Henry lost the election, as the other

princes feared his power and temperament, and was dispossessed of his duchies by Conrad III.

Henry the Lion recovered his father's two duchies, Saxony in 1142, Bavaria in 1156. In 1168 he married Matilda (1156–1189), the daughter of Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and sister of Richard Lionheart. Dispossessed of his duchies after the Battle of Legnano in 1176 by Emperor Frederick I and the other princes of the German Empire eager to claim parts of his vast territories, he was exiled to the court of his father-in-law Henry II in Normandy in 1180, but returned to Germany three years later. Henry made his peace with the Hohenstaufen Emperor in 1194, and returned to his much diminished lands around Brunswick. He died there in 1195.

Brunswick and Hanover Henry's son Otto of Brunswick was elected King of the Romans and crowned as Holy Roman Emperor Otto IV. He incurred the wrath of Pope Innocent III and was excommunicated in 1215. Otto was forced to abdicate the imperial throne by the Hohenstaufen Frederick II. Brunswick Cathedral with Henry's Bronze Lion Henry the Lion's grandson Otto the Child became duke of a part of Saxony in 1235, the new so-called 'Duchy of Brunswick-Lüneburg', and died there in 1252.

The Welf dynasty of Brunswick-Lüneburg would continue to rule in Hanover until the defeat of George V of Hanover, Austria's ally in the Austro-Prussian War, and the annexation of Hanover by Prussia. In 1692 the head of the cadet Calenberg line was raised to the status of an imperial elector, and became known as the Elector of Hanover. His son, Georg Ludwig, inherited the British throne in 1714 as a result of the Act of Settlement 1701. Members of the Welf dynasty continued to rule Great Britain until the death of Queen Victoria in 1901; in Britain they were known as the House of Hanover. Hanover itself was raised to a kingdom in 1814, but was annexed by Prussia following the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, in which Hanover had sided with Austria.

The senior line of the dynasty ruled the much smaller Duchy of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. This line became extinct in 1884. Although the Duchy should have been inherited by the Duke of Cumberland, son of the last king of Hanover, suspicions of his loyalty led the duchy's throne to remain vacant until 1913, when Cumberland's son, Ernst August, married the daughter of Kaiser Wilhelm II and was allowed to inherit the duchy. His rule there was short-lived, however, as the monarchy came to an end following the First World War in 1918.

The Welf dynasty continues to exist. Its current head, Ernst August, is the third and present husband of Princess Caroline of Monaco. Early Welf Princes (1070-1269) Dukes of Bavaria and Saxony Welf I, Duke of Bavaria (1070-1077, 1096-1101) Welf

II, Son of Welf I; Duke of Bavaria (1101–1120) Henry the Black, Son of Welf I; Duke of Bavaria (1120–1126) Henry the Proud, Son of Henry the Black; Duke of Bavaria (1126–1138), Duke of Saxony (1137–1139) Henry the Lion, Son of Henry the Proud; Duke of Saxony (1142–1180), Duke of Bavaria (1156–1180) Count Palatine of the Rhine Henry V, Count Palatine of the Rhine, Son of Henry the Lion; Count Palatine of the Rhine (1195–1213) Henry VI, Count Palatine of the Rhine, Son of Henry V; Count Palatine of the Rhine (1213-1214) Holy Roman Emperor Otto IV, Son of Henry the Lion; Holy Roman Emperor (1198-1215) Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg Otto I, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Grandson of Henry the Lion; Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1235–1252) Albert I, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Son of Otto I; Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1252–1269); Ancestor of the House of Hanover John, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Son of Otto I; Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg (1252–1269).

### Origin of Este Family



The story begins in the Lombard period, has a first name with Boniface I, arrived with Charlemagne in Italy, the writings of the 813 they say Count and Duke of Tuscany, with influence and authority on the Liguria and Corsica, The Este family originated from the Roman Attii family, which migrated from Rome to East to defend Italy against Goths. The first known member of the house was Margrave Adalbert of Mainz, known only as father of Oberto I, Count palatine of Italy, who died around 975.

With Oberto started the branches of Obertenghi, the family is divided into four branches, one of these will give rise to the Canossa (no coincidence that the father of the famous Matilda was called Bonifacio), and from these will be born another branch that gave rise to the house of Este.

Alberto Azzo I and Azzo I and II can be considered the true founders. Este was a small county given in fief by Emperor Otto I to the Count Azzo di Canossa towards the end of 900, then a part of the family moved to the hills of the Canossa Este, grouping the neighboring estates of Cerro, Calaone, Montagnana, Monselice and the low Polesine.



Oberto's grandson **Albert Azzo II**, Margrave of Milan (996–1097) built a castle at Este, near Padua, and named himself after it. Alberto Azzo II Modena, July 10, 1009 - Modena, August 20, 1097, Margrave of Milan , and Liguria, Count of Gavello and Padua, Rovigo, Lunigiana, Monselice, and Montagnana, aka, Albertezzo II, was

a powerful nobleman in the Holy Roman Empire. He is considered the founder of Casa d'Este, having been the first family to be master of Este, a town of Padua.

Alberto Azzo II was the only son of Albert Azzo I, Margrave of Milan. He inherited his father's offices around 1020, and continuously increased his properties in northern Italy. In 1069–1070, he tried to acquire Maine for his son Hugh, because his wife, Garsende, was a co-heiress of the previous counts of Maine. Hugh was declared count, but he could not prevail against Robert the duke of Normandy, who had been betrothed to the last heiress. In the Investiture Controversy between Henry IV, Holy Roman Emperor, and Pope Gregory VII, Azzo attempted to mediate, but later he joined the side of the Pope. Around 1073 he made a castle at Este his residence, from which the House of Este, the dynasty to which he belongs, takes its name. Before his building project, Este was little more than a village.

His son Welf IV d'Este moved to Germany, first to Carinthia and then to Bavaria, giving rise to one of the most important families in European history, **the Guelphs**. This in turn ultimately led to the ascension to the English throne in 1714 with George I of England. Another son Fulco I of Milan was the first for whom there is a documented of "Marquis d'Este."

Azzo d'Este II, 996–1097, lord of Este and the founder of his family's greatness, was invested with Milan by the emperor. He had 3 sons from two marriages, two of whom became the ancestors of the two branches of the family.

- Welf IV, the eldest (d. 1101), was the son of Kunigunde (d. 1056), the last of the Elder Welfs. He inherited the property of his maternal uncle, Welf, Duke of Carinthia, became duke of Bavaria in 1070, and is the ancestor of the elder branch, the House of Welf.
- Hugh, issue of Azzo's second marriage to Garsend of Maine, inherited the County of Maine, his mother's dowry, but sold it one year later and died without heirs.
- Fulco I, Margrave of Milan (d. about 1128/35), the third son, is the ancestor of the younger Italian line of Este.

The two surviving branches, with Duke Henry the Lion of Saxony and Bavaria on the German side, concluded an agreement in 1154 which allocated the family's Italian possessions to the younger line, the Fulc-Este, who in the course of time acquired Ferrara, Modena and Reggio. Este itself was taken over in 1275 by Padua and in 1405 (together with Padua) by Venice.



Azzo's son, **Guelph d'Este IV or Welf IV**, d. 1101, was adopted by his maternal uncle, Guelph III, whom he succeeded as duke of Carinthia. In 1070 he was made duke of Bavaria. The grandfather of Henry the Proud of Bavaria and Saxony, Guelph IV was the founder of the German line of the Guelphs, from whom the **British royal family is descended**. He died on Cyprus while crusading.

Azzo d'Este II had another son, who continued the Italian line of the house; among that son's successors was **Obizzo d'Este I**, d. 1193. Obizzo and his grandson played an important part in the struggle of the Guelphs against Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I (see Guelphs and Ghibellines). He married the heiress of one of the two families contending for supremacy in Ferrara. His grandson, Azzo d'Este VI, 1170–1212, was *podestà* [chief magistrate] of Mantua and Verona and fought to obtain Ferrara, but it was left for his son, Azzo d'Este VII, 1205–64, to succeed in becoming (1240) *podestà* of that city at the head of the triumphant Guelph party. Obizzo d'Este II, d. 1293, was made perpetual lord of Ferrara in 1264, lord of Modena in 1288, and lord of Reggio (now Reggio nell' Emilia) in 1289.

Because Ferrara was held as a fief from the pope, the Este became papal vicars in 1332. Niccolò d'Este III 1384–1441, made Ferrara a center of arts and letters and increased the power of his house by playing his more powerful neighbors against each other. Under his successors the court of the Este became one of the most brilliant in Europe. Among them were his illegitimate sons Leonello d'Este, 1407–50, an accomplished prince, and Borso d'Este, 1413–71, who received the title duke of Modena and Reggio from Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III in 1452 and that of duke of Ferrara from Pope Paul II in 1471.

Niccolò's legitimate son Ercole d'Este I, 1431–1505, lost some territory in wars against Venice. Ercole's beautiful and brilliant daughter, Beatrice d'Este, 1475–97, married Ludovico Sforza, duke of Milan, one of the most lavish of all Renaissance princes. Her sister, Isabella d'Este, 1474–1539, married Francesco Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua. Ariosto, Boiardo, and Berni were her friends, and Leonardo da Vinci and Titian painted portraits of her.

Ercole I was succeeded by his son, Alfonso d'Este I, 1476–1534, second husband of Lucrezia Borgia. In the Italian Wars he entered the League of Cambrai against Venice and remained an ally of Louis XII of France even after Pope Julius II had made peace with Venice. The pope declared Alfonso's fiefs forfeited and excommunicated him (1510); Modena and Reggio were lost. However, in 1526–27 Alfonso participated in the expedition of Charles V, Holy Roman emperor and king

of Spain, against Pope Clement VII, and in 1530 the pope again recognized him as possessor of those duchies. Ariosto lived at his court in Ferrara after a long employment by Alfonso's brother, Ippolito I, Cardinal d'Este, 1479–1520, to whom Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is dedicated.

Alfonso's son and successor, Ercole d'Este II, 1508–59, married Renée, daughter of Louis XII of France. He joined the pope and France against Spain in 1556, but made a separate peace in 1558. He also was a patron of the arts, as was his brother, Ippolito II, Cardinal d'Este, 1509–72, an able diplomat who led the pro-French party at the papal court. Ippolito built the celebrated Villa d'Este at Tivoli.

With Ercole II's son, Alfonso d'Este II, 1533–97, the direct male line of the house ended. He willed his titles to his cousin, Cesare d'Este, 1533–1628, but Pope Clement VIII refused to recognize Cesare's rights, and Ferrara was incorporated into the Papal States in 1598. Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II recognized Cesare's rights to Modena and Reggio, but without Ferrara the duchy lost political importance.

The last duke, Ercole d'Este III, was deposed in 1796 by the French and died in 1803. His daughter, Maria Beatrice, married Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, a son of Austrian Emperor Francis I, who founded the house of Austria-Este. After the restoration (1814) of the duchy of Modena their son and grandson, Francis IV and Francis V, ruled as dukes of Modena, Massa, and Carrara. Francis V was expelled in 1859, and his territories were annexed (1860) to the kingdom of Sardinia.

### **Elder branch – The Guelph, Electors of Hanover or royal family of Great Britain.**



The House of Hanover (or Guelph) was a German branch of the Italian House of Este, which descended from the Roman gens "Actii", and Marcus Actius (the husband of Julius Caesar's sister, Julia "Major"), descendant of Azio, an Albanese prince (650BC), considered the dynasty's ancestor, the son of Mettus, the last King of Alba "Longa" (mother-city of Rome), thus, through a dynasty of kings, Prince Azio claimed the sun-goddess, Venus, as his ancestress. His descendants became Roman senators, and at least one served as Roman Governor of Britain, namely, Marcus Actius, Rom. Gov. 401-406.

The descendants of Azio came to be known as the House of Este during medieval times. The House of Este divided in the eleventh century into three major branches

descended from three sons of Ezzo II, the Marquis of Italy and Lord of Este (d1097). His son Folk was the ancestor of the Italian branch (Folk-Este) who were the dukes of Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio in Italy; his son Hugh inherited the French province of Maine and founded the French branch of the family; and, his son Welf was invited to Germany by his mother-in-law who gave him all the possessions of his wife's father, Welf of Bavaria, and was the ancestor of the German branch (Welf-Este, or Guelph), who gave a line of dukes to Bavaria, became dukes of Brunswick, and one line became the electors and later kings of Hanover.

The elder branch of the House of Este, the House of Welf, historically rendered "Guelf" or "Guelph" in English, produced dukes of Bavaria (1070–1139, 1156–1180), dukes of Saxony (1138–1139, 1142–1180), a German King (1198–1218), and the dukes of Brunswick and Lüneburg (1208–1918), later styled the "Electors of Hanover" when two branches of the family recombined in 1705.

After the peace ending the Napoleonic wars reshaped Europe ushering in the Modern era, the Electorate of Hanover (duchy of Brunswick and Lüneburg held in personal union by the king of Great Britain, George III) was dissolved by treaty, its lands were enlarged, and the state promoted to a kingdom. The new kingdom existed from 1815 to 1866, but upon accession of Queen Victoria (who could not inherit Hanover under the Salic law) in 1837; it passed to her uncle and thus ceased to be in personal union with the British Crown.

**The House of Este hence gave Great Britain and the United Kingdom the "Hanoverian monarchs" (1714–1901).**

All British monarchs since George I of the United Kingdom have been descended from the House of Este. George's father, Ernst August, was a member of the house of Welf, who are descended from the House of Este.

Also, the Jacobite "pretenders" James Francis Edward Stuart, Charles Edward Stuart and Henry Benedict Stuart were descended from the House of Este. This was due to the mother of James Francis Edward, a Modenese princess, Mary Beatrice d'Este.

**The following British consorts are also descendants of the House of Este**

Queen Mary Beatrice (Mary Beatrice d'Este, 1658- 1718), the wife of James II of England, who was also James VII of Scotland (reigned 1685- 1688).

Queen Caroline (Caroline of Brunswick) (1768- 1820), the wife of George IV of the United Kingdom (reigned 1820- 1830), as her mother was the sister of George III of the United Kingdom.

Queen Alexandra (Alexandra of Denmark) (1844- 1925), the wife of Edward VII of the United Kingdom (reigned 1901- 1910), as her mother's family, the German princely house of Hesse- Cassel, were descendants of George II of the United Kingdom.

Queen Mary (Mary of Teck) (1867- 1953), the wife of George V of the United Kingdom (reigned 1910- 1936, was the great- grand- daughter of George III.

Philip (b. 1921), the husband of the reigning queen, Elizabeth II (reigning since 1952) is a descendant of Queen Victoria's. Also, his grandfather was the brother of Queen Alexandra.

Queen Victoria was the granddaughter of George III, and was an ancestor of most major European royal houses. She arranged marriages for her children and grandchildren across the continent, tying Europe together; this earned her the nickname “the grandmother of Europe”. She was the last British monarch of the House of Hanover; her son King Edward VII belonged to the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the line of his father, Prince Albert. Under semi-Salic law, Victoria could not inherit the German kingdom and duchies unless the entire male line became extinct; those possessions passed to the next eligible male heir, her uncle Ernest Augustus I of Hanover, the Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale-the fifth son of George III. The current head of the House of Hanover is Ernst August V, Prince of Hanover.



The Family Titles and Styles – The members of this family bear the title Prince or Princess of Hannover, of Great Britain and Ireland, Duke/Duchess of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, Royal Highness. The British titles are due to their male-line descent from King Ernst August I of Hannover, son of King George III of Great Britain and Ireland, and are used by the family in spite of the British Crown stripping the family of their British titles, including the Dukedom of Cumberland and Teviotdale, during the First World War.

During the First World War (1914–1918), many monarchs of countries from both sides were closely related due to their mutual descent from Queen Victoria, King Christian IX or both. The most commonly cited example is the fact that King

George V of Great Britain, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and Empress Alexandra Feodorovna of Russia, empress consort of Tsar Nicholas II, were all first cousins via Queen Victoria. Other relatives who fought against Germany in addition to Russia and the United Kingdom were Romania, whose queen-consort, Marie, wife of King Ferdinand I, was a cousin of the Kaiser and Greece, whose queen-consort, Sophia, wife of King Constantine I, was the Kaiser's own sister. Additionally, King George V was a first cousin, through King Christian IX, of both Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and King Constantine I of Greece. Shortly before the end of the war, Nicholas, his wife and children were executed by the Bolsheviks. Other first cousins of George V, whose countries were neutral during the war, were King Christian X of Denmark, Queen Victoria Eugenie of Spain (queen-consort of King Alfonso XIII) and King Haakon VII of Norway (who was also George's brother-in-law via his marriage to George's sister, Maud)

As descendants of Queen Victoria: the royal families of Norway, Sweden, Spain (through the paternal grandmothers of the reigning kings), and Denmark (through the present queen's mother). All the families are connected with the House of Guelph in the line of Este from which the House of Windsor and thus the present Queen of England, Elizabeth II, descends. The Guelphs are so intertwined with the German aristocracy through the House of Hanover that it would take several pages to mention all their connections. All (almost) European royal houses originate from the House of Hanover and thus from the House of Guelph.

