

Victoria and Albert's Descendants as their Living Legacy

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Most people are aware that King Charles III. and his family are direct descendants of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and carry their famous ancestors' monarchic legacy into the 21st century. However, the living legacy of Victoria and Albert extends far beyond these royal descendants and today includes hundreds of people living on all continents.¹

When Albert's father had died in 1844, the shaken young man took up a common genealogical metaphor and likened his family to a tree, whose trunk was split by a storm and whose branches then had to stand alone all over the world.² Twenty-two years later, his widow moaned that having a large family was quite a burden³ – on the other hand, her family network remained one of the most important parts of her life.

Royal family, it has been acknowledged, was (and is) only to some extent private: from the presence of government officials at children's births, to the instrumentalization of family for PR purposes, to leaving masses of written and often intimate testimonies for researchers to peruse.⁴ This is why royal biographers have looked at innumerable aspects of Victoria and Albert's private lives: from their family relationships, their love life, day-to-day routines, servants, eating habits, clothing and hats, health and much more. Some of the most recent work has dealt with the family's national identities, a micro-history of twenty-four days in Victoria's life, and how her posthumous image

¹ In the following text, I refer to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert as Victoria and Albert without repeating their titles. I use the nicknames Vicky and Bertie for Victoria, The Princess Royal and Albert Edward, The Prince of Wales, to differentiate them from their parents, however, I do not refer to the other children by their nicknames.

² Letter to Stockmar of 29. Jan. 1844, see: *Jagow*, Kurt (ed.): *Prinzgemahl Albert. Ein Leben am Throne. Eigenhändige Briefe und Aufzeichnungen 1831–1861*, Berlin 1937.

³ Letter to Vicky on 26. April 1876. See: *Fulford*, Roger (ed.): *Darling Child. Private Correspondence between Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess of Prussia, 1871–1878*, London 1976.

⁴ On media and privacy, see: *Otnes, Cele/Maclaran*, Pauline: *Royal Fever. The British Monarchy in Consumer Culture*, University of California Press 2015.