

= Wehha of East Anglia =

Wehha was a pagan king of the East Angles who , if he actually existed , ruled the kingdom of East Anglia during the 6th century , at the time the kingdom was being established by migrants from what is now Frisia and the southern Jutland peninsula . Early sources identify him as a member of the Wuffingas dynasty , which became established around the east coast of Suffolk . Nothing of his reign is known .

According to the East Anglian tally from the Textus Roffensis , Wehha was the son of Wilhelm . The 9th century History of the Britons lists both Wehha , who is named as ' Guillem Guercha ' , as the first king of the East Angles , and his son and successor Wuffa , after whom the dynasty was named . It has been claimed that the name Wehha was a hypocoristic version of Wihst?n , from the Anglo @-@ Saxon poem Beowulf , which , along with evidence such as the finds discovered at Sutton Hoo in 1939 , suggests a connection between the Wuffingas and a Swedish dynasty , the Scylfings .

= = Background = =

Wehha is thought to have been one of the earliest rulers of East Anglia , an independent and long @-@ lived Anglo @-@ Saxon kingdom that was established in the 6th century , and which includes the modern English counties of Norfolk and Suffolk .

According to R. Rainbird Clarke , migrants from southern Jutland " speedily dominated " the Sandlings , an area of southeast Suffolk , and then , by around 550 , " lost no time in conquering the whole of East Anglia " . Rainbird Clarke identified Wehha , the founder of the dynasty , as one of the leaders of the new arrivals : the East Angles are tentatively identified with the Geats of the Old English poem Beowulf . He used the evidence of the finds at Sutton Hoo to conclude that the Wuffingas originated from Sweden , noting that the sword , helmet and shield found in the ship burial at Sutton Hoo may have been family heirlooms , brought across from Sweden in the beginning of the 6th century . As it is now believed that these artefacts were made in England , there is less agreement amongst scholars that the Wuffingas dynasty was directly linked with Sweden .

The extent of the kingdom of the East Angles can be determined from a variety of sources . Isolated to the north and east by the North Sea , there were mainly impenetrable forests to the south and the swamps and scattered islands of the Fens on its western border . The main land route from East Anglia would at that time have been a land corridor , along which ran the prehistoric Icknield Way . The southern neighbours of the East Angles were the East Saxons and across the other side of the Fens were the Middle Angles . It has been suggested that the Devil 's Dyke (near modern Newmarket) at one time formed part of the kingdom 's western boundary , but as its construction can only be dated from between the 4th and 10th centuries , it cannot be established to be of Early Anglo @-@ Saxon origin .

= = Genealogy = =

Wehha is a semi @-@ historical figure and no surviving evidence has survived to show he actually existed or was ever king of the East Angles . The name Wehha is included in tallies of the ruling Wuffingas dynasty : the name appears as ?ehh ?ilhelming - Wehha Wilhelming - in the East Anglian tally from the Textus Roffensis , an important collection of Anglo @-@ Saxon laws and Rochester Cathedral registers that has survived in the form of two distinct books that were bound together in the 13th century . According to this list , which is also known as the Anglian collection , Wehha was the son of Wilhelm , who was the son of Hryp , who was the son of Hroðmund , the son of Trygil , the son of Tyttman , the son of Casere Odisson , the son of the god W?den . Wehha 's son Wuffa , after whom the Wuffingas dynasty is named , is also listed .

According to the 9th century History of the Britons , a man listed as Guillem Guercha was the first of his line to rule as king of the East Angles . The History of the Britons lists Guillem Guercha 's descendants and ancestors : ' Woden begat Casser , who begat Titinon , who begat Trigil , who begat Rodmunt , who begat Rippa , who begat Guillem Guercha , who was the first king of the East

Angles ' . According to the 19th @-@ century historian Sir Francis Palgrave , Guercha was a distortion of Wuffa . D. P. Kirby is among those historians who have concluded from this information that Wuffa 's father was the founder of the Wuffingas line .

Despite the Wuffingas ' long list of ancestors ? that stretch back to their pagan gods ? their power in the region can only have been established in the middle third of the 6th century , if Wehha is taken as the dynastic founder . Martin Carver warns against using the scant material that exists to draw detailed inferences about the earliest Wuffingas kings .

The descendants of Wehha

See Wuffingas for a more complete family tree .

= = The name Wehha = =

The name Wehha has been linked as a hypocoristic (shortened) version of Wihst?n , the father of Wiglaf in the Anglo @-@ Saxon poem Beowulf , strengthening the evidence for a connection between the Wuffingas dynasty and a Swedish royal dynasty , the Scylfings . It has also been suggested that Wehha is a regular hypocoristic form of Old English names beginning with W? (o) h- , for instance in the unattested name * Weohha . Lindqvist 's conjecture that Wehha is a hypocoristic form of the name Weohstan is linguistically not possible , according to O 'Loughlin , as Weohstan is a later West Saxon name .

O 'Loughlin notes that Wehha and his father Wilhelm can be linked with a person named Wehilo and his father Weho , who are listed in a genealogy found a manuscript of the laws of Rothari , a 7th @-@ century king of the Lombards .

Wehha may occur on a bronze pail excavated from the Chessell Down cemetery on the Isle of Wight , which possesses the runic inscription wecca .

= = Reign and succession = =

Nothing is known of Wehha or of his rule , as no written records have survived from this period in East Anglian history . At an unknown date Wehha was succeeded by Wuffa , who was ruling the kingdom in 571 , according to the mediaeval chronicler Roger of Wendover . The date given by Roger of Wendover cannot be corroborated .