

= Kingdom of East Anglia =

The Kingdom of the East Angles (Old English : ʒast Engla Rʒce ; Latin : Regnum Orientalium Anglorum) , today known as the Kingdom of East Anglia , was a small independent kingdom of the Angles comprising what are now the English counties of Norfolk and Suffolk and perhaps the eastern part of the Fens . The kingdom formed in the 6th century in the wake of the Anglo @-@ Saxon settlement of Britain . It was ruled by the Wuffingas in the 7th and 8th centuries , but fell to Mercia in 794 , and was conquered by the Danes in 869 , forming part of the Danelaw . It was conquered by Edward the Elder and incorporated into the Kingdom of England in 918 .

= = History = =

The Kingdom of East Anglia was organized in the first or second quarter of the 6th century with Wehha listed as the first king of the East Angles , followed by Wuffa .

Until 749 the kings of East Anglia were Wuffingas , named after the semi @-@ historical Wuffa . During the early seventh century , under Rædwald of East Anglia , it was a powerful Anglo @-@ Saxon kingdom . Rædwald , the first of the East Anglian kings to be baptised as a Christian , is considered by many experts to be the person who was buried within (or commemorated by) the ship burial at Sutton Hoo , near Woodbridge . During the decades that followed his death in around 624 , East Anglia became increasingly dominated by the powerful kingdom of Mercia . Several of Rædwald 's successors were killed in battle , such as Sigeberht (killed circa 641) . Under Sigeberht 's rule and the guidance of his bishop , Felix of Burgundy , Christianity was firmly established in East Anglia .

After Æthelberht II was killed by the Mercians in 794 , and until 825 , East Anglia ceased to be an independent kingdom , although it briefly reasserted its independence under Eadwald in 796 . It survived until 869 , when the Vikings defeated the East Anglians in battle and their king , Edmund the Martyr , was killed . After 879 , the Vikings settled permanently in East Anglia . In 903 the exiled Æthelwold ætheling induced the East Anglian Danes to wage a disastrous war on his cousin Edward the Elder . By 917 , after a succession of Danish defeats , East Anglia had submitted to Edward and was incorporated into the kingdom of England , afterwards becoming an earldom .

= = = Settlement = = =

East Anglia was settled by the Anglo @-@ Saxons as early as around 450 , earlier than many other regions . It emerged from the settlement and political consolidation of Angles in the approximate area of the former territory of the Iceni and the Roman civitas with its centre at Venta Icenorum , close to Caistor St Edmund . According to Bede , the East Angles (as well as the Middle Angles , the Mercians and the Northumbrians) were descended from natives of Angeln (now in modern Germany) . The first reference to the East Angles is from around 704 ? 713 , in the Whitby Life of St Gregory .

The East Angles formed one of the seven kingdoms known to post @-@ mediaeval historians as the Heptarchy , a scheme used by Henry of Huntingdon in the twelfth century . Some modern historians have questioned whether seven independent kingdoms ever really existed contemporaneously , and claim that the political situation was much more complicated .

= = = Pagan rule = = =

The East Angles were initially ruled by the pagan Wuffingas dynasty , apparently named after an early king , Wuffa , although his name could have been an invention to explain the dynastic name , which means ' descendants of the wolf ' . An indispensable main source of information on the early history of the kingdom and its rulers is Bede 's Ecclesiastical History , but he provided few facts relating to the chronology of the East Anglian kings or the length of their reigns . Nothing is known of the earliest kings of East Anglia , or how the kingdom was organised , although a possible indication

of the original centre of royal power is the concentration of ship @-@ burials at Snape and Sutton Hoo in eastern Suffolk . The " North Folk " and " South Folk " may have existed before the arrival of the first East Anglian kings .

The most powerful of the Wuffingas kings was Rædwald , ' the son of Tytil , whose father was Wuffa ' , according to the Ecclesiastical History . For a brief period in the early seventh century , whilst Rædwald ruled , East Anglia was among the most powerful kingdoms in Anglo @-@ Saxon England : Rædwald was described by Bede as the overlord of the kingdoms south of the Humber . In 616 , he had been strong enough to defeat and kill the Northumbrian king Æthelfrith at the Battle of the River Idle and enthrone Edwin of Northumbria . He was probably the individual honoured by the sumptuous ship burial at Sutton Hoo . It has been suggested by Blair , on the strength of the parallels between some of the objects found under Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo and those discovered at Vendel in Sweden , that the Wuffingas may have been the descendants of an eastern Swedish royal family . However , as those items previously thought to have come from Sweden are now believed to have been made in England , it seems less likely that the Wuffingas were of Swedish origin .

= = = Christianization = = =

During the seventh century , Anglo @-@ Saxon Christianity was successfully established . The extent to which paganism was displaced in East Anglia is exemplified by a lack of any East Anglian settlements that are named after the old gods .

Rædwald was the first East Anglian king to be baptised , in 604 . He maintained a Christian altar , but at the same time continued to worship pagan gods . From 616 , when pagan monarchs briefly returned in Kent and Essex , until Rædwald 's death , East Anglia was the only Anglo @-@ Saxon kingdom with a reigning baptised king . On his death in around 624 , he was succeeded by his son Eorpwald , who was soon afterwards converted from paganism as a result of the influence of Edwin , but his new religion was evidently opposed in East Anglia and Eorpwald met his death at the hands of a pagan , Ricberht . After three years of apostasy , Christianity prevailed with the accession of Eorpwald 's brother (or step @-@ brother) Sigeberht , who had been baptised during his exile in Francia . Sigeberht oversaw the establishment of the first East Anglian see for Felix of Burgundy at Dommoc , probably at Dunwich . He later abdicated in favour of his brother Ecgric and retired to a monastery .

= = = Mercian aggression = = =

The eminence achieved by East Anglia under Rædwald did not last long , as his dynasty fell victim to the rising power of Penda of Mercia and his successors . Throughout the mid @-@ seventh to early ninth centuries , Mercian power grew until a vast region from the River Thames to the Humber , including East Anglia and the south @-@ east , became a zone of Mercian hegemony . In the early 640s Penda defeated and killed both Ecgric and Sigeberht , who was later venerated as a saint . Ecgric 's successor Anna and Anna 's son Jurmin were killed together in 654 at the Battle of Bulcamp , near Blythburgh . Having eliminated Anna 's challenge to his rising power , Penda then subjected the East Anglians to Mercian overlord @-@ ship . In 655 Æthelhere of East Anglia joined Penda in a campaign against Oswiu , which ended in a disastrous Mercian defeat at the Battle of the Winwaed , in which both Penda and his ally Æthelhere were killed .

The last Wuffingas king was Ælfwald , who died in 749 . During the late 7th and 8th centuries East Anglia continued to be overshadowed by Mercian hegemony until , in 794 , Offa of Mercia had the East Anglian king Æthelberht executed and then took control of the kingdom for himself . A brief revival of East Anglian independence under Eadwald after Offa 's death in 796 was soon suppressed by the new Mercian king , Coenwulf .

The independence of the East Anglians was restored by a successful rebellion against Mercia led by Æthelstan in 825 . Beornwulf of Mercia 's attempt to restore Mercian control over East Anglia resulted in his defeat and death , and his successor Ludeca met the same end in 827 . The East Angles appealed to Egbert of Wessex for protection against the Mercians and Æthelstan then

acknowledged Egbert as his overlord . Whilst Wessex took control of the south @-@ eastern kingdoms which had been absorbed by Mercia during the eighth century , East Anglia could maintain its independence .

= = = Viking attacks and eventual settlement = = =

In 865 , East Anglia was invaded by the Danish Great Heathen Army , which occupied winter quarters and secured horses before departing for Northumbria . The Danes returned to East Anglia in 869 , wintering at Thetford before being attacked by the forces of Edmund of East Anglia , who was defeated and killed at Hægelisdun (identified variously as Bradfield St Clare in 983 , which is near to his final resting place at Bury St Edmunds ; Hellesdon in Norfolk (documented as Hægelisdun c.985) ; Hoxne in Suffolk ; and now with Maldon in Essex) . From this point onwards , East Anglia effectively ceased to be an independent kingdom . Having defeated the East Angles , the Danes then installed puppet @-@ kings to govern on their behalf , while they resumed their campaigns against Mercia and Wessex . In 878 the last portion of the Great Heathen Army to remain active was defeated by Alfred the Great and withdrew from Wessex after making a peace treaty . In 880 the Vikings returned to East Anglia under the leadership of Guthrum , who , according to the mediaeval historian Pauline Stafford , " swiftly adapted to territorial kingship and its trappings , including the minting of coins " .

In addition to the traditional territory of East Anglia , Cambridgeshire and parts of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire , Guthrum 's kingdom probably included Essex , the only portion of Wessex which had come under Danish control . A peace treaty made between Alfred and Guthrum sometime in the 880s .

= = = Absorption into the Kingdom of England = = =

In the early tenth century , the East Anglian Danes came under increasing pressure from Edward the Elder , king of Wessex . In 902 Edward 's cousin Æthelwold ætheling , who had been driven into exile after an unsuccessful bid for the throne , arrived in Essex after a stay in Northumbria . He was apparently accepted as king by some or all of the Danes in England and in 903 he induced the East Anglian Danes to wage war on Edward . This ended in disaster , with the death of Æthelwold and of Eohric of East Anglia in a battle in the Fens .

Between 911 and 919 , Edward expanded his control over the rest of England south of the Humber , establishing in Essex and Mercia burhs , often designed to control the use of a river by the Danes . In 917 , the Danish position in the area suddenly collapsed . A rapid succession of defeats culminated in the loss of the territories of Northampton and Huntingdon , along with the remainder of Essex : a Danish king , probably from East Anglia , was killed at Tempsford . Despite reinforcement from overseas , the Danish counter @-@ attacks were crushed , and following the defection of many of their English subjects as Edward 's army advanced , the Danes of East Anglia and Cambridge both capitulated .

The territory of East Anglia was absorbed into the kingdom of England . Norfolk and Suffolk became part of the new earldom of East Anglia , when in 1017 , Thorkell the Tall was made earl of East Anglia by Cnut the Great . The restoration of the ecclesiastical structure in the region saw the two former East Anglian bishoprics replaced by a single one based at North Elmham .

= = Old East Anglian dialect = =

The East Angles spoke Old English . Their language is historically important , as they were among the first Germanic settlers to arrive in Britain during the fifth century : according to Kortmann and Schneider , East Anglia " can seriously claim to be the first place in the world where English was spoken " .

The evidence for dialects in Old English comes from the study of texts , place @-@ names , personal names and coins . A. H. Smith was the first to recognise the existence of a separate Old

East Anglian dialect , in addition to the previously recognised dialects of Northumbrian , Mercian , Saxon and Kentish . He acknowledged that his proposal of such a dialect was tentative , acknowledging that " the linguistic boundaries of the original dialects could not have enjoyed prolonged stability " . As no East Anglian manuscripts , Old English inscriptions or literary records such as charters have survived to modern times , there is little evidence to support the existence of an Old East Anglian dialect . According to a study made by Von Feilitzen in the 1930s , the recording of many place @-@ names in Domesday Book was " ultimately based on the evidence of local juries " and so the spoken form of Anglo @-@ Saxon places and people was partly preserved in this way . Evidence from Domesday Book and later sources does suggest that a dialect boundary once existed , corresponding with a line that separates from their neighbours the English counties of Cambridgeshire (including the once sparsely @-@ inhabited Fens) , Norfolk and Suffolk .

= = Geography = =

The kingdom of the East Angles bordered the North Sea to the north and the east , with the River Stour historically dividing it from the East Saxons to the south . The North Sea provided a " thriving maritime link to Scandinavia and the northern reaches of Germany " , according to the historian Richard Hoggett . The kingdom 's western boundary varied from the rivers Ouse , Lark and Kennett to further westwards , as far as the Cam in what is now Cambridgeshire . At its greatest extent , the kingdom comprised the modern @-@ day counties of Norfolk , Suffolk and parts of eastern Cambridgeshire .

Erosion along the eastern border and deposition along the north coast altered the shape of the East Anglian coastline during Roman and Anglo @-@ Saxon times (and continues to do so today) . During Saxon times the sea inundated the naturally low @-@ lying Fens . As sea levels fell alluvium was deposited near major river estuaries and the ' Great Estuary ' near Burgh Castle became slowed closed off by a large spit .