

Anglo-Saxon, term used historically to describe any member of the Germanic peoples who, from the 5th century ce to the time of the Norman Conquest (1066), inhabited and ruled territories that are today part of England and Wales. Archaeological evidence suggests that the first migrants from the Germanic areas of mainland Europe included settlers from Frisia and antedated the Roman withdrawal from Britain about 410 ce. Their subsequent settlements in what is now England laid the foundation for the later kingdoms of Essex, Sussex, and Wessex (Saxons); East Anglia, Middle Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria (Angles); and Kent (Jutes). The term Anglo-Saxon seems to have been first used by Continental writers in the late 8th century to distinguish the Saxons of Britain from those of the European continent, whom Bede the Venerable had called *Antiqui Saxones* ("Old Saxons"). The name formed part of *rex Angul-Saxonum* ("king of the Anglo-Saxons"), which was sometimes used by King Alfred of title, Wessex (reigned 871–99) and some of his successors. Ethnically, the Anglo-Saxons actually represented an admixture of Germanic peoples with Britain's preexisting Celtic inhabitants and subsequent Viking and Danish invaders.