

The Mercian Polity, 716-918

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✓ Verified Book of The Mercian Polity, 716-918

Summary:

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All too often, the kingdom of Mercia is judged either in relation to its neighbours, such as Frankia, or the united kingdom of England that succeeded it. In this new study, Dr Burghart offers an alternative view of Mercia, one that assesses the kingdom upon its own terms within the context of its own time, as well as exploring its wider political-cultural place in Anglo-Saxon history. Rejecting previous historiographical obsessions with 'royal power', the book instead, views royal prerogatives as simply one dynamic amongst many rather than the crucial framework of government on which all else hung. It demonstrates that although there were times when the Mercian kingship was the major political force in British politics, there was no continuum of power but rather a series of relatively short-lived periods of dominance. Through an examination of a detailed chronology of the fluctuations of power within Mercia, the book concludes by arguing that the structure of the eighth- and ninth-century kingdom was not substantially different from those of its neighbours, but that it may have had important differences with the tenth-century kingdom of England which was to succeed it.

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