Richard Gameson, ed., The Lindisfarne Gospels: New Perspectives. (Library of the Written Word 57; The Manuscript World 9.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017. Pp. xii, 226; 16 color plates, many color figures, 3 maps, and 4 tables. $173. ISBN: 978-90-04-33783-1.

The twelve papers collected in this volume were presented at a conference held in conjunction with the exhibition of the Lindisfarne Gospels in Durham in 2013 and offer new research on specific aspects of the manuscript: its archaeological and historical background, manuscript production in early Northumbria, its art, text, gloss, and liturgical function. While the papers don't always speak to, and sometimes contradict each other, the editor has done an excellent job of cross referencing where relevant, allowing for easy comparison of information and argument throughout the volume.

In "'A place more venerable than all Britain': The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon Lindisfarne," David Petts pulls together the archaeological evidence for the development of the early monastic site on Holy Island. He outlines shifts in the landscape and its use, as well as the changing architecture of and artistic/religious influences on the community to reveal an extensive and multi-purpose monastic settlement very different to what we see on the island today. Claire Stancliffe's "The Irish Tradition in Northumbria and the Synod of Whitby," explores the complex relationship between the Roman and Irish churches in Northumbria, demonstrating that there was no distinct Roman/Irish binary division, but complex ecclesiastical and monastic structures that often incorporated both Roman and Irish features – especially within the monasteries. She includes case studies of Lindisfarne, Whitby, Ripon, and Wearmouth-Jarrow, and also suggests knowledge and use of Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit at both Lindisfarne and Whitby (under Abbess Ælfflæd whose name is erroneously given as Æthelflæd). Richard Gameson's own "Northumbrian Books in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries" is a survey of the books known to have been present in Northumbria, and those few monasteries to which they can be attributed with any certainty. It includes an appendix of manuscripts that were or might have been owned or written in Northumbria.

Michelle P. Brown's "Reading the Lindisfarne Gospels" Text, Image, Context" is the first of six papers focused on details of the art and text of the Gospels. Here she elaborates on her argument, developed in multiple earlier publications, that Lindisfarne is a manuscript of reconciliation, situated, and situating its makers, within both an international ecclesiastical community and a specific historical context on the eve of the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy. In "The Eusebian Apparatus in the Lindisfarne Gospels: Ailerán's Kanon euangeliorum as a Lens for its Appreciation," Thomas O'Laughlin argues that Ailerán's mid-seventh century poem (text and translation provided) offers a way of understanding how the Eusebian paratext was understood by the makers of Lindisfarne and other early gospel books. Heather Pulliam's "Painting by Numbers: The Art of the Canon Tables," then provides a detailed art-historical analysis of the Lindisfarne Canon Tables, situating them within the context of other, generally far more elaborate early medieval Canon Tables. She argues that Lindisfarne uses mathematical measure and proportion as a sign of divine perfection. Carol Farr examines the liturgical indications (marginal signs, graphic emphasis, lists of feasts and readings) in the manuscript in "The Lindisfarne Gospels and the Performative Voice of the Gospel Manuscript." She provides a compelling argument for the manuscript's liturgical use as part of a communal experience that united believers as and with the body of Christ. She extends her argument to the manuscript's cross pages, reading them as signs of perfection promised by the gospels. "The Lindisfarne Gospels: The Art of Symmetry and the Symmetry of Art," by Michael N. Brennan analyses the "rotational symmetry" of the cross pages, suggesting multiple possible interpretations for them: signs of God's plan, visual puzzles, symbolic crucifixions, and the personal project of an exceptional artist. In "The Book of Durrow and the Lindisfarne Gospels," Nancy Netzer suggests that Durrow might have been a lengthy project that brought its completion, probably on the island of Iona, close in date to the Lindisfarne Gospels with which it is so often compared.

The final three essays are devoted to text and gloss. Richard Marsden's "The Texts of the Lindisfarne Gospels," emphasizes that the manuscript is bilingual. He identifies the Latin text as based on a Neapolitan exemplar filtered through Wearmouth-Jarrow, and goes on to examine the ways in which the tenth-century Old English gloss is as much about exploring the English language as it is about the meaning of the Latin it translates, adding a pedagogical dimension to the manuscript, and situating it within a wider glossing tradition. In "Aldred's Red Gloss," Andrew Beeby, Richard Gameson, Catherine Nicholson, and Anthony W. Parker, summarize the results of an analysis of the red ochre ink used for the gloss. Far simpler to produce than red minium, the ochre may be an indication of the decline of manuscript production in the North during the ninth and tenth centuries. Finally, E.G. Stanley's "The Lindisfarne Gospels: Aldred's Gloss" elucidates the detailed study and expanded explanations of the Latin that Aldred included at specific points as a means of transmitting "to his Northumbrian readers in their own language the inner meaning of the opulent art manifest in the book we call the Lindisfarne Gospels" (217).

In sum, this is a highly informative collection. My only quibbles with the volume are, firstly, the title is somewhat misleading. The papers do not offer new perspectives from which to understand the manuscript, rather they offer new information about the context in which it was produced and used, and new interpretations of elements of its texts and illumination. Secondly, there is no introduction or conclusion to inform readers of the larger debates or discussions that occurred during the conference. Were there larger conclusions about the making, meaning, or function of the manuscript that could significantly change our understanding of it?

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