4
Assembling and reshaping Christianity in the Lives of St Cuthbert and Lindisfarne Gospels

In the previous chapter on the Franks Casket, I started to think about the way in which a thing might act as an assembly, gathering diverse elements into a distinct whole, and argued that organic whalebone plays an ongoing role, across time, in this assemblage. This chapter begins by moving the focus from an animal body (the whale) to a human (saintly) body. While saints, in early medieval Christian thought, might be understood as special and powerful kinds of human being – closer to God and his angels in the heavenly hierarchy and capable of interceding between the divine kingdom and the fallen world of mankind – they were certainly not abstract otherworldly spirits. Saints were embodied beings, both in life and after death, when they remained physically present and accessible through their relics, whether a bone, a lock of hair, a fingernail, textiles, a preaching cross, a comb, a shoe. As such, their miraculous healing powers could be received by ordinary men, women and children by sight, sound, touch, even smell or taste. Given that they did not simply exist 'up there' in heaven but maintained an embodied presence on earth, early medieval saints came to be associated with very particular places, peoples and landscapes, with built and natural environments, with certain body parts, materials, artefacts, sometimes animals. Of the earliest English saints, St Cuthbert is probably one of, if not the, best known and even today remains inextricably linked to the north-east of the country, especially the Holy Island of Lindisfarne and its flora and fauna.

This chapter looks at how the books, relics and other material things associated with the cult of St Cuthbert reshaped 'universal' Christianity within a distinctly Northumbrian environment in the seventh and early eighth centuries. St Cuthbert has been identified as a post-Whitby figure of reconciliation, preserving the best of the 'Celtic' ascetic tradition while actively promoting a new order more in line with the European mainstream in Northumbria.[1] In

light of this view, I will consider how the saint – both as text, in the hagiographical evidence, and as relic, in the case of the incorrupt corpse – assembles and performs differing elements of Christianity through his body. In the Lives of St Cuthbert, the saintly body of Cuthbert stands in for and localises the universal Christ and thus verifies the 'realness' of God within a particular place. This body must be seen to suffer and endure, felt to heal, and heard to prophesy, in order to substantiate God within the Northumbrian environment. The sort of suffering undergone by Cuthbert mirrors the nonviolent ascetic martyrdom associated with the Irish colour term *glas*, often translated as the colour of 'sky in water' or green, grey, blue. And so the bodily substantiation of God cannot be divorced from environmental features. Human beings – even saintly humans – are not at the centre of a system of nature, but entangled within it.[2] The elemental fluidity of Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands shapes perceptions of the spiritual world and its relation to the temporal.

As well as acting as an assembly, the saintly body is also a thing that crosses the boundaries between life and death, animate and inanimate, organic and artefactual. When St Cuthbert becomes absent in death, the relics associated with his body serve to extend his afterlife and actively carry his presence across time. As material expressions of the pain endured and healed by the saint in life, the relics are what Sherry Turkle would call 'evocative objects'.[3] That is to say, they carry both ideas and emotions, bringing thoughts and feelings together. There is a sensuous intimacy to these things – the comb that derives a venerable quality and the shoes that hold the power to heal a paralysed boy, the linen cincture that cures the nuns, the pectoral cross worn on the body – which enables the inhabitants of Northumbria to not only cope with the loss of their own 'Christ' but to feel at one with an otherwise distant God.

The second section of the chapter focuses in on the Lindisfarne Gospels, dedicated to God and St Cuthbert.[4] Like the Lives, the Lindisfarne Gospels reshape a universal sign (the body of Christ as Cross) into a perceptible thing. Through its artwork, the gospel book assembles eclectic influences to create something distinctly local. The finished 'product' is not the only thing of interest here; I will take into account the process of its making (physical preparation, construction, designing and decorating) and the huge input of local resources: the sheer number of calfskins used to create this monumental work, for instance, as well as the palette used by

the artist, which emulates Mediterranean colours by drawing on exclusively local materials. What is more, the making process of the gospel book offers a glimpse into the divine for the artist–scribe usually assumed to be Eadfrith, who, like Cuthbert, becomes immersed in meditative prayer and feats of spiritual and physical endurance, whilst creating artwork that acts as a series of visual riddles, mysteries to be perceived and penetrated.

This chapter will, on the one hand, analyse things represented within literary texts; but, on the other hand, it will also be examining extant artefacts. In many ways, the textual Lives of St Cuthbert are formulaic in nature, marked by familiar hagiographical elements. Yet the specificity of these texts is located in the 'things' they describe: material items, yes, but also bodies, buildings and environmental features.[5] Such things anchor an otherwise universal Christianity in a certain time and place. More than this, a number of the books, relics, crosses and so on encountered in our texts play an active role in their narratives, displaying agency and altering the human world; they break out of their roles as inert, background objects and become things. It is not always easy to grasp the materiality – the distinctive *thingness* of things – the decorative colours of a book, say, or the fibres of a garment – through textual evidence alone. For this reason, I will also turn to extra-textual evidence. The Lindisfarne Gospels receive special attention, but also Cuthbert's coffin and its treasures, the Codex Amiatinus, the tidal isle of Lindisfarne and other things besides. This raises a further difficulty, in that many of the things described in our texts cannot be matched unproblematically to a corresponding extant, material artefact. Questions often arise over the link between textual and extra-textual counterparts. Does the silk cloth mentioned by Bede actually refer to the kind of garments found within Cuthbert's coffin? Can the empurpled gospel book of St Wilfrid, described by his biographer Stephen of Ripon, be linked to any surviving manuscript? Was the book described by Symeon of Durham as leaping overboard when the community began their wanderings really the Lindisfarne Gospels? While prepared to acknowledge such questions as the chapter progresses, I would also contend that, even where there can be no definitive corroboration, extant artefacts may still *evoke* their textual doppelgängers, summoning forth the materiality of things and recalling times, places and people of the past. These objects have the ability to anchor human memory, sustain relationships and provoke new ideas.[6]

Assembling, reshaping: the Lives of St Cuthbert

The two main hagiographical authorities for the life and miracles of St Cuthbert are a prose Life written by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne and another, slightly later, prose Life written by Bede. The anonymous Life was completed soon after the translation of the saint's body in 698 and, while influenced by conventional Christian hagiography and following the traditional form and outline of a saint's life, it also draws on local, oral sources and imbues its genre with a freshness by including many details and textures from daily life, along with references to familiar landmarks and historical characters. Its writing style is marked by conciseness and clarity. Bede's later prose Life is more diffuse, filling out the concise account of the anonymous writer, adopting what Bertram Colgrave has called a 'picturesque' style of writing and expanding upon a number of scenes, descriptions and stories. Before composing his prose Life, Bede had also written a metrical *Life of St Cuthbert*. Both of Bede's versions were based upon the earlier anonymous work and both proved very popular, being in constant demand from the eighth century onwards, in England and on the Continent.[7]

These Lives depict St Cuthbert as substantiating, reshaping and localising an otherwise distant Christianity. Julia M. H. Smith has argued that being 'Christian' in the early Middle Ages was not susceptible to a standardised definition. Rather, before *c.*1100, Christianity was organised in ways that were local but nevertheless replicable anywhere:

> In effect, early medieval Christianity was neither centralized nor systematized. Not a single, uniform cultural package to be adopted or rejected as an entity, it comprised a repertoire of beliefs, social practices, and organizational forms that could be adopted and adapted piecemeal. Thus Christianity jumped from one cultural and political context to another, repeatedly mutating and reconstituting itself in ways that preserved its core features. Differently put, a religion with an avowedly universal message managed to localize itself in a multitude of cultural contexts. Pluralisms and possibilities remained the hallmarks of early medieval Christianity – or, better, of early medieval Christianities – and enabled this universal religion to take endlessly varied local forms.[8]

For Smith, traditional narratives of the spread of Christianity do not take adequate account of these local variations. Within an early medieval context, therefore, it was less about 'being' a Christian

than 'doing' Christianity. That is, shaping and living out an idiosyncratic version of Christianity suited to one's own region. Christian belief was a continual, performative process of worship, in which divine patterns were repeatedly iterated in local, temporal spaces; faith was habitually re-enacted.[9]

We began to look at aspects of seventh- and early eighth-century Northumbria in the last chapter through the figure of St Wilfrid, a contemporary, and in many senses rival, of St Cuthbert. Wilfrid exemplifies the importance of movement and assemblage in this phase of the kingdom's development. In *The Rise of Western Christendom*, Peter Brown identifies this process as part of the formation of a 'micro-Christendom' and points to the unusual wealth of Northumbrian kings and aristocracy in the seventh century that made a massive transfer of goods from the Continent to northern Britain possible. This practice can be seen early on with Benedict Biscop, a wealthy Northumbrian nobleman turned monk who was able to move across Europe as a Christian aristocrat, in search of Christian goods, returning to the north-east with not only books but also relics, icons, embroidered silks and experts in Mediterranean styles of chanting, glassware, masonry and so on. This trend continued with men such as Ceolfrith, another aristocrat and successor to Biscop, and with the aforementioned Wilfrid of York, of whom more will be said later in this chapter. The piecemeal transfer of so many cultural goods meant that the seventh century in Britain was an 'exciting age' where each area developed its own distinctive 'micro-Christendom' through the 'skilled deployment of resources' from abroad. Each region was convinced that its own local variant of a common Christian culture was the 'true' one and each believed that it 'mirrored, with satisfactory exactitude, the wider macrocosm of worldwide Christian belief and practice'. The result was the unprecedented rise of a number of 'vibrant and idiosyncratic versions' of 'true' Christianity. Although Brown suggests that these micro-Christendoms took shape all across the British Isles, he singles out the kingdom of Northumbria as 'one area where the creation of conflicting "micro-Christendoms" led to dramatic moments of conflict'.[10]

One way in which St Cuthbert assembled and performed aspects of a universal Christianity within his own micro-Christendom was by adopting and adapting the role of Christ for a local context. The aim of his hagiographers was to reveal that Cuthbert 'showed in his life the marks of Christ crucified and that God had shown his love for that life of discipleship by signs and wonders'.[11]

Accordingly, the anonymous Life depicts the saint in the guise of Christ-as-healer on numerous occasions. This, in itself, may not be unusual in a work of hagiography, but the anonymous monk of Lindisfarne – writing soon after the translation of 698 – pins the specificity of the saintly act down by consistently naming those who are healed. The anonymous writer creates an 'impression of reality' via constant reference to places and people known to his original readers or hearers.[12]

Like Christ in the New Testament, Cuthbert eliminates disease, distress and pain; but he does so for the inhabitants of his own time and place. In Book 2, for example, the anonymous writer tells us how the saint healed a woman 'vexed by a devil' (*a daemonio vexatam*).[13] The woman's husband, named and identified as Hildmer, calls on St Cuthbert for help but does not reveal the true nature of her affliction: 'Iam enim erubescebat illam olim religiosam, tamen a demonio uexatam indicare' [for he was ashamed to declare that a woman once so religious was oppressed by a devil] (II.8). Cuthbert soon displays his prophetic powers and fully reveals the nature of the affliction that the husband had tried to conceal from him, before also exhibiting his healing abilities. It is, in fact, the horse's reins held by the saintly hands that affect the cure: 'mulier quasi de somno surgens uenit in obuiam, et primo tacto freni plene pulsato demone sanitati pristine reddita, ut illa cum gratiarum actione testata est ministrauit illis' [the woman, as if rising from sleep, came to meet them, and at the first touch of the reins, the demon was completely driven away, and, as she thankfully declared, she was restored to her former health and ministered to them]. On another occasion, Cuthbert heals a faithful brother from dysentery. The saint summons the brother, called Walhstod, to his cell, and, as the anonymous Life informs us, 'Ille uero gratanter accedens, primo tactu eius, sicut memorans frequenter cum lacrimis indicare solet, plene omnen grauitatem languoris deseruisse eum' [He gladly consented and at the saint's first touch, as he frequently narrated, recalling the story with tears, the grievous sickness entirely deserted him] (IV.12).

These and other episodes demonstrate the importance of sensory contact. More often than not, it is either the touch of the saint or the touch of something (e.g. the horse's reins) touched by the saint that brings about the healing effect. Where God's sensory contact with humanity is mediated by Jesus in the New Testament, it is mediated by Cuthbert in Northumbria, who takes on the healing role of Christ within his own specific milieu. In her discussion

of body and voice in the Judaeo-Christian scriptures, Elaine Scarry points out that in the Hebrew scriptures the powerful God does not have the power of self-substantiation and therefore the wounded human body becomes the confirmation of God's 'realness'. Man has a body; God has no body. Thus the difference in power 'depends on this difference in embodiedness'.[14] However, in the Christian scriptures God does have a body. Scarry asserts that the human body substantiates God in the New Testament, as in the Old, but now verification of God comes about via 'sensory apprehension'. The Christian scriptures are 'the story of the sentient body of God being seen and touched by the sentient body of man' and so the centrality of the act of witnessing 'cannot be overstated'.[15] In Anglo-Saxon Northumbria we have a culture which has adopted these Judaeo-Christian narratives but for which the body of Christ is no longer perceptible within their own time and place. Yet it could be made to be so again. The saintly body of Cuthbert verifies the existence of God and, moreover, does so within a particular place. This verification is reliant on perception; the human body becomes the site and perceiver of 'signs' of the reality and authority of God. Healing can be seen as one source of this apprehension, since even as 'the Old Testament act of wounding is explicitly presented as a "sign", so the New Testament act of healing is'.[16]

As well as substantiating God by assuming the role of healer, Cuthbert must also take on the role of sufferer. The cross on which Christ suffered is unusual as a weapon since 'its hurt of the body does not occur in one explosive moment of contact; it is not there and gone but there against the body for a long time'.[17] In order to verify the reality of God within Northumbria, Cuthbert's own suffering must resemble this kind of pain, not sudden but long-lasting. It must also be witnessed. Cuthbert cannot endure in isolation but must be seen to suffer, even as he was felt to heal, by local men and women. Thus we have the famous incident at Coldingham monastery, where Cuthbert begins to walk about at night on the seashore, singing as he keeps vigil:

> Quo conperto, a quodam clerico familie, qui incipiebat occulte de longinquo obsequi eum temmptando, scire uolens quomodo uitam nocturnam transegeret. Ille uero homo Dei Cuðberht, inobstinata mente adpropinquans ad mare usque ad lumbare in mediis fluctibus, iam enim aliquando usque ad ascellas tumultuante et fluctuante tinctus est.

> [When a certain cleric of the community found this out, he began to follow him from a distance to test him, wishing to know what he did with himself at night. But that man of God, approaching the sea with mind made resolute, went into the waves up to his loin-cloth; and once he was soaked as far as his armpits by the tumultuous and stormy sea.] (II.3)

Standing in the freezing North Sea throughout the night is an act of prolonged suffering.[18] Slow and drawn out, with ice cold waves against the body for a long time, Cuthbert undergoes a kind of watery crucifixion. As Christ's suffering on Calvary was witnessed and narrated in the gospels, Cuthbert's ordeal in Northumbria does not go unseen or unrecorded: 'clericus uero familiae supradictus in scopulosis locis latens, uisu pauidus et tremebundus, tota nocte coangustatus prope mortem accederat' [the above-mentioned cleric of the community lay hidden amid the rocks, frightened and trembling at the sight and, being in anguish all night long, he came nigh to death].

The next day, the cleric confesses all and prays for pardon, which Cuthbert agrees to on condition that the brother vows never to tell the story so long as he is alive (*numquam te esse quamdiu uixero narraturum*). Nevertheless, as with Christ, 'the consent to have a body is the consent to be perceived and the consent to be perceived is the consent to be described'.[19] The brother keeps his vow and only tells the story of Cuthbert's endurance after his death. Once the saintly body cannot be perceived to suffer, and thus substantiate God, it must be described to do so. While the New Testament describes how Christ was perceived to heal and perceived to suffer, so too does the anonymous Life describe Cuthbert. Yet in the latter case the description is not of a universal Saviour, but rather the local saint of a particular place.

St Cuthbert's suffering is not only witnessed by inhabitants of Northumbria. It is also intimately connected to the natural features of the Northumbrian environment. As with the constant naming carried out by the anonymous writer, his references to a familiar landscape serve to root Christianity in a specific place and time. The Irish influence on Cuthbert's Lives is important here. While (as we shall see) the cult of Cuthbert looked to many, diverse sources for inspiration, it was Irish and, specifically, Columban traditions, which coloured the nature of Cuthbert's interaction with the land, sea and sky around him. Alan Thacker reminds us that, in the late seventh century, Lindisfarne was still marked by its Irish origins and that the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* 'exhibits

especially close links with Adomnan's *Life of Columba*'. Thacker points to one particularly striking parallel in that 'both authors relate a story in which their hero is spied upon by a suspicious monk while engaged in solitary prayer'.[20] The Columban influence on this incident becomes even more intriguing if we consider the early Irish Church's division of martyrdom into three colours: red, white and *glas*. Here, each colour is linked to a different kind of suffering. It is the last colour – *glas* – that can be most strongly related to the suffering endured by Cuthbert in his Lives.

What did *glas* or *glasmartre* actually signify in the early Irish tradition? Clare Stancliffe carried out a careful investigation of this term and found that *glas* lends itself to the idea of austerity, for 'it has a figurative sense of "fresh, raw, sharp" (of weather), and "harsh" (in a moral sense)'.[21] It was associated with the type of bloodless, lifelong martyrdom developed in the East from the second century on by the likes of Clement of Alexandria, whose essence lay in bearing daily witness to Christ. Stancliffe claims that *glas* martyrdom may be linked in particular to the importance of penitence in the early Irish Church, and to the sort of fearsome penances which we meet in the *De arreis*, such as 'spending the night in water, or on nettles or nutshells, or with a dead body'.[22] The first of these practices obviously takes us once more to Cuthbert's vigil in the freezing sea.

Indeed, the colour term *glas*, and the sort of suffering it called for, was bound up with water and watery rites. Alfred K. Siewers agrees that *glas* is 'the colour of a nonviolent ascetic "martyrdom" involving strict self-discipline' and adds that the term is best translated as 'the colour of sky in water'.[23] Both Stancliffe and Siewers highlight the role of tears in *glas* martyrdom, whereby tears of penance express the element of water in the human body, binding that body to the environment in which it suffers. In the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert*, one often encounters the saint weeping or others weeping before him. When, for instance, Cuthbert is elected to the bishopric of Lindisfarne, we are told that King Ecgfrith and Bishop Tumma come to him in his cell, and lead him away unwillingly, 'lacrimans et flens' [weeping and wailing] (IV.1). The tears demonstrate Cuthbert's reluctance to forsake his solitary life, but they may also be seen as part of *glas* martyrdom, a physical expression of the bond between the ascetic and the island far out to sea, surrounded by deep water, on which he endured hardship.

The term *glas* is not associated with water alone, though: it is a colour adjective used to describe a pale shade of blue (sky in water);

but also to denote green (as of grass or foliage); grey (as of stone, mist or horses); natural-coloured (as of wool); or wan (as of complexion).[24] *Glas* had a range of often environmental related meanings and could describe a combination of natural colours, green, grey and blue, linking land, sea and sky.[25] The elemental fluidity of Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands, where sky and sea, sea and sand, sand, grass and rock, rock, mist and sea, come together and break away, connect and divide, in an ever-shifting blend of green, grey and blue, blue, grey and green, creates a fitting environment for the austere way of life endured by the *glas* martyr.

The Lives draw attention to the role of these natural features in shaping Cuthbert's time as a solitary ascetic. The anonymous writer depicts Lindisfarne as an in-between place, where Cuthbert can make the transition between this world and the other. After his time as a prior at Melrose, Cuthbert, we are told, 'postremo tamen secularem gloriam fugiens clam et occulte abscedens enauigauit' [finally fled from worldly glory and sailed away privately and secretly] (III.1). It is then that Cuthbert is invited by Bishop Eata 'ad hanc insulam nostrum que dicitur Lindisfarnae' [to this island of ours which is called Lindisfarne] where he is able to be both present and absent (*praesens et absens*), carrying out further acts of healing and curing. And so the transitional phase in this saint's life and the mysterious yet predictable retreat-and-return of the tidal isle are intimately intertwined.

In due course, Farne Island offers itself as the stage on which Cuthbert may conduct his feats of eremitic endurance:

> Post plures itaque annos ad insulam quam Farne nominant, undique in medio mari fluctibus circumcinctam, solitariam uitam concupiscens conpetiuit.
>
> [And so, after some years, desiring a solitary life he went to the island called Farne, which is in the midst of the sea and surrounded on every side by water.] (III.1)

In an analogous passage, Bede emphasises the remoteness of Farne Island in comparison to Lindisfarne:

> Farne dicitur insula medio in mari posita, quae non sicut Lindisfarnensium incolarum regio, bis cotidie accedente aestu oceani, quem reuma uocant Greci, fit insula, bis renudatis abeunte reumate litoribus contigua terrae redditur, sed aliquot milibus passum ab hac semiinsula ad eurum secreta, et hinc altissimo, et inde infinito clauditur oceano.

> [There is an island called Farne in the middle of the sea which is not like the Lindisfarne region – for that owing to the flow of the ocean tide, called in Greek "rheuma", twice a day becomes an island and twice a day, when the tide ebbs from the uncovered shores, becomes again contiguous to the land; but it is some miles away to the south-east of this half-island, and is shut in on the landward side by very deep water and on the seaward side by the boundless ocean.] (Chapter XVII)[26]

Water serves here as an exile's desert, severing Cuthbert from the world of men. Farne, this land in the midst of the sea, roofed by grey, leaky sky, the sky reflected in the sea, shapes perceptions of the spiritual, eternal realm and its relation to the physical environment, provoking the solitary ascetic into an embodied interaction with that other world. Cuthbert responds in turn and puts the otherworldly, demonic inhabitants of Farne to flight, before reshaping the natural environment in which he finds himself. According to the anonymous Life, Cuthbert digs down into the earth through hard and stony rock. Then,

> Alterum uero cubitum mirabilem desuper cum lapidibus incredibilis magnitudinis nisi scientibus tantum Dei uirtutem in eo esse, et terra commixtis constructum aedificauit, faciens ibi domunculas, de quibus nisi sursum coelum uidere nihil potuit.
>
> [He also built a marvellous wall another cubit above it by placing together and compacting with earth, stones of such great size as none would believe except those who knew that so much of the power of God was in him; therein he made some little dwelling places from which he could see nothing except the heavens above.] (III.1)

The physical and the spiritual, natural and supernatural, human and nonhuman, are continuously overlapping in this scene. Cuthbert, endowed with superhuman strength, physically reshapes the earth and stone in order to make a visual bridge to heaven, directly connecting the local, tangible Farne Island to a universal, intangible God.

Even as Cuthbert's watery crucifixion shows the influence of Adomnan's *Life of St Columba* on the anonymous and subsequent Lives, so too does Cuthbert's solitary battle against demons recall Evagrius' translation of Athanasius' *Life of St Antony*.[27] But, at the same time, Cuthbert's choice of 'desert' retreat – first Lindisfarne, then Farne Island – localises his endurance, his *glas* martyrdom. In his hagiography, Cuthbert's body thus becomes a sort of conduit, channelling diverse Christian practices into the Northumbrian

land, sea and sky; he acts as a witness (martyr) to a distant and universal God in a very distinct environment and, in turn, the natural features of that environment reshape Christianity in their own image.

Although, following the language of the anonymous writer, I have been talking about Cuthbert's 'solitary' retreat and his eremitic 'exile' on Lindisfarne and Farne Island, we ought to recall the role of witnessing in substantiating an otherwise invisible God. It is worth noting here that those who witness and perceive Cuthbert within Northumbria are, more often than not, the powerful. For instance, the men and women who benefit from his acts of healing are ecclesiastics or the upper levels of lay society.[28] Power is interlinked with perception and place: Cuthbert heals and those who feel healed perceive God in a particular place; but those who perceive are also those who hold power within that place. Similarly, the one who witnessed Cuthbert's vigil in the seawater was again a cleric of the community (*clerico familie*).

This was also the case when, desiring a solitary life (*solitariam uitam concupiscens*), Cuthbert went to the island called Farne. As we have seen, the anonymous writer describes this place as in the midst of the sea and surrounded on every side by water (*in medio mari fluctibus circumcinctam*). But if water in one sense severs and isolates, it also connects. While the island of Farne is farther out to sea, 'it is closer to the royal fortress – a mere two miles away'.[29] Although it is claimed that Cuthbert made some little dwelling places from which he could see nothing but the heavens above, the saint remains within the view of Bamburgh, the site of Bernician royalty. So, as Cuthbert looks towards the heavens, towards God, those with power look towards Cuthbert. If his austere life on Farne brings the saint closer to God, those who see him must surely see God more closely from and within their own place of power.

Hagiographical writings depict St Cuthbert as assembling and performing diverse elements of Christianity through his body. This was part of a larger political picture. In the previous chapter, I identified the 664 Synod of Whitby as a moment in time when different things, both material and immaterial, came together, making the synod itself another kind of *þing* – a meeting with an issue and an outcome. Peter Brown understands the synod as a necessary culmination of the piecemeal transfer and building up of goods that had been going on in Northumbria since at least the time of Benedict Biscop. While Northumbria stretched far to the north into a world dominated, through the

monastery of Iona, by the Christianity of Ireland, its supremacy also reached as far south as the Thames where it absorbed areas that were exposed to 'Roman' influence. And so, under King Oswy, the kingdom of Northumbria 'had to face the consequences of its triumphant expansion' and 'risked falling apart'.[30] The council summoned by Oswy at Whitby in 664 can therefore be seen as an effort to keep the disparate bits and pieces together. Indeed, Whitby was not so much a conflict of ideas as a conflict of contradictory bodies and things. For in an almost totally illiterate society, the 'precise nature of visible gestures and the precise timing of festivals spoke volumes'. The Synod of Whitby took place in a world fused by externals: hairstyles distinguished monk from warrior, warrior from farmer; loyalty and status was demonstrated by personal ornament; the correct dating of Easter affected the timing of mass baptisms. And so to 'treat external matters, such as the cutting of one's hair and the day of one's principal festival, as if they were matters of indifference was to remove from the entire fabric of profane and ecclesiastical society the vital bond of demonstrative loyalty'.[31]

This helps to explain the importance of Cuthbert's perceptible sanctity in the hagiography, in which he not only takes and combines different ideas, beliefs and customs, but uses his body to show that they can be made to work, visibly and tangibly, within Northumbria. The time was right for such a demonstration. From the end of the seventh century onwards, once the dust had started to settle after Whitby, there were signs of what Michelle Brown calls 'a new eirenic atmosphere of reconciliation and collaboration pervading the thought of many of the leading ecclesiastical figures of Northumbria and Ireland who sought to celebrate their combined Roman, Eastern and Celtic legacies'.[32] Although, at the synod itself, King Oswy, convinced by the case argued by Wilfrid, had opted in favour of the 'Roman' forms of Christendom, more in keeping with the European mainstream, the situation post-Whitby played out in a more balanced manner. As the seventh century progressed, the solution turned out to be a 'constructive compromise' whereby Lindisfarne and other key Columban houses were allowed 'to retain something of their earlier allegiances while actively promoting the new order in Northumbria'. For Michelle Brown, it is Cuthbert who emerges in Bede's *Historia* 'as the leading figure in the process of reconciliation'.[33]

As products of his posthumous cult, the various Cuthbertian Lives depict the saint performing his important reconciliatory

role while alive. Yet this performance did not end with his death. In fact, it was crucial for the community of Lindisfarne, and for Northumbria in a wider sense, that Cuthbert did not 'die' – or crucial, at least, that his presence remained perceptible. Following Cuthbert's death, the leadership of the Lindisfarne community passed for a brief but divisive period to Wilfrid. Thacker identifies this as a period of anxiety for a large section of the Northumbrian ecclesiastical establishment, since 'hostility to the Wilfridians persisted'.[34] The post-Whitby process of reconciliation was temporarily under strain, as Wilfrid's stridently Romanist vision for the English Church was 'dynamic and outward looking, but not one that took account of the needs and sensitivities of those who might not fully concur'.[35] The inflexible *Romanitas* of the Wilfridians threatened the constructive compromise favoured by most Northumbrian ecclesiastics. We ought to remember that this view of Wilfrid and, conversely, of Cuthbert, is largely inflected through Bede's writing. Thacker acknowledges this, suggesting that Bede did not wholeheartedly approve of Wilfrid and, at the very least, 'disliked the contentiousness which helped to bring divisions upon the church'.[36] Indeed, Lindisfarne and Wearmouth-Jarrow would become closely aligned through the spirit of post-Whitby compromise and reconciliation, and Bede's reworking of the earlier Life must be seen in this context. In particular, his prose Life may be understood as a response to the continued, posthumous threat that Wilfrid and his cult posed to these reconciliatory aspirations. It was, after all, completed at approximately the same time as Stephen's *Life of Wilfrid*, *c.*720.[37]

At the time of writing his prose life of the saint, Bede was more distanced from the lifetime of Cuthbert – both temporally, if we date the Bedan Life to around 720, and spatially, situated as he was in Wearmouth-Jarrow.[38] As such, his account may lack some of the verisimilitude of the earlier Life: Bede 'often deliberately omits the name of a person or place which he thinks may not be familiar to the wider circle of readers for whom his Life was probably intended'.[39] In the stead of this verisimilitude, I would argue that Bede's work is more evocative than that of the anonymous writer – most noticeably in its use of sensory detail.

For a start, the anxiety over the death of Cuthbert and ensuing leadership of Wilfrid sheds some light on Bede's additions to his prose Life. Particularly interesting here is Bede's enlarged and elaborated account of Cuthbert's last days and death. In both the metrical and prose versions, this account 'includes an attempt

to make the figure of Cuthbert the rallying point of the opposition to the regime installed at Lindisfarne after his death'.[40] In the prose version, Bede ascribes the prolonged account of Cuthbert's death to Herefrith, present abbot of Lindisfarne. This first-person narrative-within-a-narrative provides us with a greater sense of intimacy, as we hear, verbatim, how Herefrith himself spoke with Cuthbert in the days and moments leading up to his death. One such encounter occurs in Chapter XXXIX. Here, Herefrith tells us how he finds Cuthbert lying in a corner of the oratory and goes and sits down beside him. This is presented as a close, somewhat tender, moment, in which the two men sit together in silence for a time, since the 'weight of affliction' makes it hard for Cuthbert to talk. This intimate moment soon acquires a more political tone, with Cuthbert finding the strength to launch into a discourse on 'peace and humility' (*pace et humilitate*) and warn the brethren 'cauendisque eis qui his obluctari quam oblectari mallent' [about being on our guard against those who would rather fight such things than delight in them] (XXXIX). Given what we know about the short, divisive period after Cuthbert's death, it is not difficult to see what Bede – via Herefrith, via Cuthbert – might be hinting at in this instance.

However, it is not only Cuthbert's words that Bede lingers over in his extended account of the saint's last days. Through the personal recollections of Herefrith, we also feel closer to Cuthbert's physical presence. In Chapter XXXVIII, Cuthbert's ailing, dying body loses none of its healing abilities. Herefrith tells us: 'Cunque increscente languore uideret tempus suae resolutionis instare, praecepit se in suam mansiunculam atque oratorium referri' [And when his illness increased and he saw that the time of his departure was at hand, he commanded that he should be carried back to his little dwelling place and oratory]. Herefrith and his brethren do carry the weakening Cuthbert back, even as the community of Lindisfarne would carry the saintly body with them in the years, the centuries, after his death. As he is being carried, Cuthbert catches sight of Wahlstod, the monk suffering from dysentery, and commands him to stay inside the oratory with him till about the ninth hour. The presence of Cuthbert's body cures Wahlstod, who tells his brethren: 'Possum autem tibi rem referre nouam permirabilem, quia ex quo ingrediens illuc tetigi episcopum deducturus eum ad oratorium, continuo sensi me omni illa longe infirmitatis molestia carere' [And I can tell you some very wonderful news, for since I went in there and touched the bishop when about to take

him into the oratory, I forthwith felt that all my affliction and long-standing infirmity had left me].

Bede enigmatically tells us in Chapter XL that, 'Siquidem sepulto uiro Dei tanta aecclesiam illam temptationis aura concussit, ut plures e fratribus loco magis cedere, quam talibus uellent interesse periculis' [After the man of God was buried, so great a blast of trial beat upon the church that many of the brethren chose to depart from the place rather than be in the midst of such dangers]. While the nature of these troubles remains unspecified, they do coincide with the year in which Wilfrid ruled the church of Lindisfarne.[41] Cuthbert's brief absence after death ushers in strife, but, in the prose Life, Bede presents these troubles as ephemeral and, moreover, does not allow Cuthbert's body to move out of focus for long. After only a brief sentence describing the 'storm of trouble' Bede mentions the role of Eadberht in succeeding to the bishopric and quelling the danger. Although Eadberht is praised and promoted here, it is the body of Cuthbert that takes centre stage and is depicted as an object of unity for the community. The chapter concludes with Herefrith recollecting how 'Impositum autem naui uenerabile corpus patris, ad insulam Lindisfarnensium retulimus. Quod magno occurentium agmine, chorisque canentium susceptum est' [We placed the body of the venerable father on the ship, and bore it to the island of Lindisfarne. It was received by a great company who came to meet it and by choirs of singers]. Thus, the saint's body exudes serenity and harmony in opposition to the aforementioned discord.

By lingering for so long over the build up to Cuthbert's death and then drawing our attention to the continuing influence of the body after his passing away, Bede leaves his audience uncertain as to when that moment of 'death' actually occurs. We are told that Cuthbert 'sent forth his spirit to the bliss of heaven' (*intentam supernis laudibus animam ad gaudia regni coelestis emisit*) and yet he does not appear to truly depart in that instant; his body remains present, influential, even active. What is more, eleven years on, the brethren of Lindisfarne find that that body is still perceptible:

> Et aperientes sepulchrum inuenerunt corpus totum quasi adhuc uiueret integrum, et flexibilibus artuum compagibus multo dormienti quam mortuo similius. Sed et uestimenta omnia quibus indutum erat non solum intemerata, uerum etiam prisca nouitate et claritudine miranda parebant. Quod ubi uiderunt, nimio mox timore sunt et tremore perculsi, adeo ut uix aliquid loqui, uix auderent intueri miraculum quod parebat, uix ipsi quid agerent nossent. Extremam autem indumentorum eius partem pro ostendendo

> incorruptionis signo tollentes, nam que carni illius proxima aderant prorsus tangere timebant, festinarunt referre antistiti quod inuenerant, qui tum forte in remotiore a monasterio loco refluis undique maris fluctibus cincto solitarius manebat.
>
> [And opening the sepulchre, they found the body intact and whole, as if it were still alive, and the joints of the limbs flexible, and much more like a sleeping than a dead man. Moreover all his garments, in which he had been clothed, were not only undefiled but seemed to be perfectly new and wondrously bright. When they saw this, they were struck with great fear and trembling, so that they hardly dared to say anything or even look upon the miracle which was revealed, and scarcely knew what to do. But they took away the outer garments to show the miracle of his incorruption, for they did not dare to touch what was nearest the skin; and they hastened to relate to the bishop what they had found. He happened to be in solitude in a place remote from the monastery, surrounded on every hand by the sea at flood tide.] (Chapter XLII)

Eleven years had passed since Wilfrid's divisive leadership, but the perceptibility of Cuthbert's undecayed body reminds the brethren that their saintly protector is not an abstract memory but a still-present entity.

In accordance, Bede's narrative condenses the time that lapses between Cuthbert's warning against pride and discord (Chapter XXXIX), the storm of trouble that breaks out after his burial (Chapter XL) and the finding of the incorrupt body (Chapter XLII). We can see, from this, how, at 'particular moments when there is within a society a crisis of belief' (in this case, threat of schism and doubt over the correct way of doing Christianity) 'the sheer material factualness of the human body will be borrowed to lend that cultural construct the aura of "realness" and "certainty"'.[42] And so Cuthbert's body remains within view, continuing to perform its reconciliatory role beyond death. The way in which Bede describes the body adds further ambiguity over where life ends and death begins. It looks as if it is 'sleeping' (*dormienti*) and the limbs are still 'flexible' (*flexibilibus*), imbuing the 'corpse' with the potential to both awaken and move. In awe of the miracle, the brethren are initially fearful of perceiving the body – they did not dare to look or speak, and were afraid to touch anything that had been next to his skin – for it is perception that will collapse the distance between their living bodies and the saint's dead body, creating a temporarily uncanny moment in which something kept out of sight is revealed once more as strangely familiar.

As well as acting as an assembly, then, Cuthbert's saintly body is also a thing that crosses the boundaries between life and death, animate and inanimate, as well as those between the organic and artefactual, man and manmade. To demonstrate the latter, I would point to the way that Bede's description of the incorrupt body transfers and extends the living power of the corpse onto the clothes in which the saint was buried. Bede says that the vestments were not merely undefiled but crisp and fresh like new and 'wondrously bright' (*claritudine miranda*). It is, indeed, the outer garments that the brethren take with them as a sign of the body's incorruption and yet, as mentioned, they were afraid to touch anything that had been next to the skin – it is almost as if the saint's power is slowly seeping from his bones and spreading outwards to permeate that which is closest (an early indication, perhaps, of the sacred space exuded by the corpse). When the brothers carry the clothes to Eadberht, he kisses them with great affection, as though they were still wrapped around the father's body (*quasi patris adhuc corpori circundata*).

This sets the scene for the final miracles, where things that touched or were touched by St Cuthbert exert their healing power, extending his afterlife and carrying his presence across time. A striking example of this is the incident concerning the boy who, being paralysed in every limb, was healed by Cuthbert's shoes. The anonymous Life tells us how a young paralytic boy (*adolescens paraliticus*) was brought in a wagon from another monastery to the physicians at Lindisfarne. As the doctors try every cure on the boy, he lay with 'pene cunctis membris mortifactis dissolutus' [almost all his limbs mortified and powerless] (IV.17). The doctors have no success, so the boy asks the abbot for the 'calciamenta que circumdederunt pedes sancti martyris Dei incorruptibilis' [shoes which were on the feet of the holy and incorruptible martyr of God]. The boy puts the shoes on his feet that night and rests, and in the morning he rises, miraculously healed, and sings praise to the Lord: 'Surgens in matutinis quod dictu mirum est, Domino laudem stans cantauit, qui prius pene absque lingua nullum membrum mouere potuit' [He arose in the morning and, marvellous to relate, he stood up and sang praise to the Lord, he who before could hardly move any of his members except his tongue].

The anonymous writer reports that this miracle occurred 'only this year' (*in praesenti anno factum est*). Bede, writing in around 720, is remembering and reporting the same event from a slightly greater distance in time. And yet while Bede is more

removed – temporally – from the incident, he once again lingers over the details, carefully describing the workings and the effects of the healing shoes:

> Qui consulto abatte attulit calciamenta quae uiri Dei in sepulchro pedes induerant, et ea pedibus dissolutis aegroti circundedit. Siquidem primo a pedibus eum paralisis apprehenderat. Fecit autem hoc noctis initio, cum tempus requiescendi adesset. Statimque ille placidum dimissus in soporem, procedente intempestae noctis silentio coepit alternis palpitare pedibus, ut palam qui uigilabant et uidebant ministri animaduerterent, quia donata per reliquias uiri sancti uirtute medicandi, sanitas optata a planta pedum per caetera membra esset transitura. At ubi consuetum in monasterio nocturnae orationis signum insonuit, excitatus sonitu resedit ipse. Nec mora solidatis interna uirtute neruis artuumque compagibus uniuersis, et dolore fugato sanatum se esse intelligens surrexit, et in gratiarum actionem Domino omne nocturnae siue matutinae psalmodiae tempus stando persoluit.
>
> [And having consulted the abbot, the servant brought the shoes which had been upon the feet of the man of God in the sepulchre and put them upon the nerveless feet of the sick man – for the paralysis had first seized him in the feet. He did this at the beginning of the night when the time for rest had come; immediately the sick man fell into a calm sleep and, as the silence of the dead of night came on, first one and then the other foot began to twitch, so that the servants, who were awake and watching, clearly perceived that the desired restoration had been given by means of the healing powers of the saint's relics, and that it would pass from the soles of his feet throughout his other limbs. And when the accustomed signal for the nightly prayer sounded through the monastery, he was aroused by the sound and sat up. Without delay the sinews and all the joints of his limbs were strengthened with inward power, the pain was banished, and he rose up realising that he had been healed, and spent the whole time of the nightly psalm-singing, or matins, standing up and giving thanks to the Lord.] (XLV)

By providing us with a moment-by-moment account of how the power of the relics starts to work (first one foot twitches, then another) and how the young boy felt (his healed limbs strong and painless) afterwards, Bede paints a still more intimate picture of this scene, so that his audience can almost feel the healing sensation of the shoes for themselves and become sensuously, as well as intellectually, involved.

Relics such as these shoes may be classed as evocative objects, a description which recognises the power of objects in human

lives and underscores the 'inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things'.[43] As material expressions of the pain endured and healed by Cuthbert in life, his relics evoke the saint's persistent power and presence. One can see from the above descriptions of Cuthbert's shoes that there is a sensuous intimacy to these things, which not only enables the inhabitants of Northumbria to cope with the loss of their own 'Christ' but to feel at one with an otherwise distant God. What is more, the efficacy of Cuthbert's relics is not broken by the transition between life and death. In Chapter XXIII of the Bedan prose Life, we are told that 'Neque uero sanitatum miracula per hominem Dei tametsi longe ab hominibus positum fieri cessabant' [Now the miracles of healing wrought by the man of God did not cease although he was far removed from mankind]. This is followed by an account of how a linen cincture (*zonam lineam*) sent by Cuthbert healed Abbess Ælfflæd when she 'girded herself with it' (*succinxit se illa*) before, a few days later, another nun experiencing excruciating head pains is cured when the abbess bound up her head with the cincture (*et hac illi caput circumligare curauit*). Whether Cuthbert is absent geographically or absent in death, his relics work in the same way. These things – the shoes that are worn, the cincture that is bound round the body – evoke the presence of Cuthbert across time and space in order to provoke a physical response which, in turn, leads to belief – the belief that an eternal, universal God is at work in Northumbria.

Once again, however, those who benefit from the healing power of these relics are primarily ecclesiastical and/or aristocratic members of Northumbrian society. The paralytic youth healed by the shoes belonged to another monastery (*de alio monasterio*), while Abbess Ælfflæd, healed by the cincture, was the daughter of King Oswy and presided over the monastery at Whitby, first with her mother Eanflæd, then alone.[44] This high-status healing is both reflected in and shaped by the quality of a number of the Cuthbertian relics themselves. Bede tells us how the garments in which the saint was buried took on his incorruptibility, appearing unfaded and wonderfully bright when the coffin was opened. But we can glean further clues about what these items of clothing might have looked like. Campbell points to an episode in Bede's prose Life (Chapter XXXVII) between Abbess Verca and Cuthbert, in which Cuthbert, preparing for his death, mentioned a *sindonis* that Verca had given him and which his body was to be wrapped in. Campbell explains that it is not entirely clear what

sindonis means,[45] but the fact that Cuthbert said that he would not wear it while he was alive 'suggests that it was valuable and such as a less ascetic man might have worn'. Campbell wonders 'whether this may not be a reference to silk of the kind in which Cuthbert's body was wrapped, though the actual silks found in the coffin seem to be later'.[46]

Thacker supports and builds on this picture of Cuthbert's burial. The enshrinement, he informs us, was 'remarkably opulent' for, despite the saint's asceticism in life, 'in death he was honoured like an emperor'. As well as the silk already mentioned, Cuthbert 'wished to be interred in a stone sarcophagus given by another high ecclesiastic, Abbot Cudda'. The body itself was 'magnificently clothed' and, along with a number of expensive and elaborate vestments, a 'golden fillet adorned the brow of the saint and at his breast hung the famous gold and garnet cross'.[47]

This pectoral cross provides evidence outside of the textual Lives for the quality of Cuthbert's relics. The 1827 opening and investigation of the tomb showed that the cross was found among the garments close to the body.[48] Like those garments, then, the cross may have been imbued with a special 'power' because of its nearness to the saintly flesh. But alongside such power we ought to consider the richness and intricacy of the Cuthbert cross itself. Elizabeth Coatsworth describes the cross as 'overdesigned' if anything and, as a result of this, it carries various connotations. For instance, there may be a numerological significance in the twelvefold subdivision of each arm, where twelve stands for the twelve apostles and also for the twelve foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem. The red garnets used for the cross add connotations of martyrdom and the crucifixion and, set against gold, bring to mind the opening imagery of *The Dream of the Rood*, where the cross is at times red with blood, at times geared with gold.[49] Coatsworth also points to the play of crosses within the cross, a design achieved by complex, underlying geometry based upon grids and compass-drawn circles. Interestingly, these design techniques are comparable to manuscript art; in the Lindisfarne Gospels 'the working lines for many of the designs can still be seen'.[50]

So, while the things associated with St Cuthbert extend the healing and substantiating power of his body beyond death, we ought not to overlook the exclusivity of their influence and the richness of their design and display. As the next section develops, we will see that processes of making, investment of time and resources, workmanship and quality, all play an important role in reshaping

universal Christianity. Access to high-status material things can bring one closer to God within Cuthbert's Northumbria; and closeness to God brings one closer to the higher echelons of Northumbrian society.

Assembling, reshaping: the Lindisfarne Gospels

Like the saintly body of Cuthbert, the Lindisfarne Gospels reshape a universal Christianity into a perceptible and distinctly local thing. Again, this reshaping may be understood as part of the formation of a micro-Christendom. Hence, the Lindisfarne Gospels assemble eclectic artistic, scriptural and codicological influences to shape something manifestly local. We witness this assembling and reshaping not only in the illuminated pages of the finished product but through the process of the gospel book's making: its physical preparation, construction, designing and decoration.[51]

One aspect of this process to take into account is the huge input of local resources. While the Lindisfarne Gospels do draw on and bring together foreign methods, ideas and images, their physical construction made exceptional demands on Lindisfarne and its surrounding environs. This can be seen, for example, from the quantity and quality of vellum used. Michelle Brown states that some 'one hundred and fifty large sheets of finely prepared calfskin (vellum) were used in the manufacture of the Lindisfarne Gospels' and that these sheets are 'remarkable for their quality and the relative scarcity of blemishes'.[52] Christopher de Hamel explains that the selection of good skins was a crucial part of parchment-making as 'medieval farm animals probably suffered from diseases and ticks, and these can leave unacceptable flaws on the skin of the flayed animal'.[53] For Brown, the consistent quality of the gospel book's vellum reveals that a great many skins must have been discarded with the implication that 'only younger animals, perhaps yearling calves, were deemed suitable and that there was an extraordinarily large pool of skins from which to select'.[54] Although Lindisfarne's tidal causeway makes the island suitable for animal husbandry – and slaughter – the community also had extensive landholdings, so it is conceivable that other estates and daughter houses would have donated skins to this remarkable endeavour.

The slaughter of young and healthy beasts, the sheer number of skins used, the keeping of the best ones and discarding of the less desirable, all suggests a regional sacrifice for the good of the gospel book. Yet this is not only a sacrifice made by the

human communities of Lindisfarne and its associates, but one that involves the nonhuman inhabitants of Northumbria too. Pointing to the production of medieval manuscripts as a specific example, Ingold reconfigures human acts of making as simply one part in a myriad of transformations involving creatures of every kind, whereby humans very often take over from where nonhumans have left off. Materials such as oak galls, goose feathers or calfskins are produced by animals and plants before being taken up for human use.[55] That Anglo-Saxon book-makers were aware of this side of the sacrifice is reflected in Exeter Book Riddle 26, as an animal skin describes its torturous transformation into a manuscript, its passage from living beast to gold-bright book:

Mec feonda sum feore besnyþede,
woruldstrenga binom. Wætte siþþan,
dyfde on wætre, dyde eft þonan,
sette on sunnan, þær ic swiþe beleas
herum þam þe ic hæfde. Heard mec siþþan
snað seaxses ecg, sindrum begrunden;
fingras feoldan, ond mec fugles wyn
geondsprengde speddropum spyrede geneahhe
ofer brunne brerd. Beamtelge swealg,
streames dæle, stop eft on mec,
siþade sweartlast. Mec siþþan wrah
hæleð hleobordum, hyþe beþenede,
gierede mec mid golde; forþon me gliwedon
wrætlic weorc smiþa, wire bifongen.
Nu þa gereno ond se reada telg
ond þa wuldorgesteald wide mærað
dryhtfolca helm, nales dol wite.
Gif min bearn wera brucan willað,
hy beoð þy gesundran ond þy sigefæstran,
heortum þy hwætran ond þy hygebliþran,
ferþe þy frodran, habbaþ freonda þy ma,
swæsra ond gesibbra, soþra ond godra,
tilra ond getreowra, þa hyra tyr ond ead
estum ycað ond hy arstafum,
lissum bilecgað ond hi lufan fæþmum
fæste clyppað. Frige hwæt ic hatte,
niþum to nytte. Nama min is mære,
hæleþum gifre ond halig sylf.

[An enemy ended my life, took away my worldly strength. Afterwards he dipped me in water, drew me out again, and set me in the sun, where I swiftly lost all the hairs that I had. Then the

> cruel knife's edge cut me, scraped me free of stains; fingers folded me and the bird's delight spread lucky droppings across me, often made tracks over the dusky border, swallowed wood dye, a share of the streams, and stepped on me again, travelling with black tracks. After that a man wrapped me with protective boards, covered me with hide, geared me up with gold; thus am I enriched by the wondrous work of smiths, wound about with wire. Now the trappings and the red dye and the glorious setting make the protector of men widely known, not the pains of the foolish. If the children of men make use of me, they will be the safer and the more sure of victory, in their hearts the bolder, and merrier in mind, in spirit the wiser; they would have more friends, dearer and closer, truer and better, more honourable and more loyal, who would gladly increase their glory and greatness and cover them with grace and kindness, clasping them closely with love's embraces. Ask what I am called, a benefit to mankind. My name is renowned, helpful to heroes and holy itself.]

The violence of the process that turns beast into book is certainly not underplayed here – the creature is killed, cut and scraped, folded and stained and bound (1–15). Yet the speaking thing also shows an awareness that its sacrifice has not been in vain. It says that it is 'niþum to nytte' [a benefit to mankind] (27) and 'hæleþum gifre' [helpful to heroes] (28). Indeed, it is difficult not to read this as somehow analogous to saintly or even Christlike self-sacrifice: the animal undergoes a violent passion or martyrdom, imitating the crucifixion of Christ. The references to gold ornamentation in Riddle 26 call to mind something more precious, lavish and richly illuminated than an ordinary manuscript; they evoke an Anglo-Saxon gospel book, perhaps one from the golden age of Northumbrian book production akin to the Lindisfarne Gospels.[56] In this way, the beast that is tortured in the process of becoming a gospel book re-enacts the very contents of its pages: Christ suffering and dying at the hands of his enemies before being resurrected and his story disseminated as the *godspel*.

If we apply the description in Riddle 26 to the many, many calves that yielded up their flesh for the Lindisfarne Gospels, we heighten our understanding of their roles in this enormous, but local, project. From an anthropocentric viewpoint, these Northumbrian animals sacrifice their bodies for Christ, bearing witness (martyrdom) to the Word made (with their) flesh. One might also recall and compare this to St Cuthbert's watery crucifixion, where the sea animals of Northumbria come forth to witness and recognise the suffering of 'Christ' in their own habitat.

The gospel book also makes use of local resources for its decoration. It is often noted that the ornament of the Lindisfarne Gospels reflects the artistic and cultural melting pot of seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria, combining Celtic and Anglo-Saxon styles with Roman, Coptic and Eastern traditions. The manuscript decoration 'mingles the interlacing zoomorphs of Germanic Anglo-Saxon art' with 'the curvilinear patterns traditional to the Celtic art of Ireland and the British west, and the art of the classical tradition, re-introduced to the region through the Church, with its associated language of Christian symbolism'.[57] Yet how was this eclectic visual effect, this blend of familiar and foreign influences, achieved? Picking up on the results of the Raman laser project, which examined the pigments of the Lindisfarne Gospels, Michelle Brown informs us that the maker of the book was 'able convincingly to emulate and even extend the range of colours available to the artists of the Mediterranean during Antiquity and the early Middle Ages using purely local materials'.[58] While this dispels evidence for the presence of lapis lazuli within the manuscript, it does place more emphasis on the skill in experimental chemistry possessed by the gospel book's maker, who must have worked with a restricted range of pigments, drawn from a restricted region. Therefore, as with the vellum that bore this decoration, the process of making once again placed the strain on the surrounding environment – even if the resulting visual display spoke of and to a wider Christian world.

I want to stay with the process of creation, but shift the focus now onto the creator of the Lindisfarne Gospels: the artist–scribe himself. Eadfrith, bishop of Lindisfarne and heir of Cuthbert, from 698 to 721, is identified by Aldred's tenth-century colophon as the 'writer' of the gospel book. The colophon reads: 'Eadfrið biscop/b lindisfearnensis æcclesiæ he ðis boc avrat æt frvma gode 7 sce cvðberhte 7 allum ðæm halgvm. ða. ðe / gimænelice in eolonde sint' [Eadfrith, bishop of the Lindisfarne Church, originally wrote this book, for God and St Cuthbert and for all the saints whose relics are on the island].[59] In an earlier essay entitled 'The Lindisfarne Scriptorium', Brown thought that this attribution might have referred simply to Eadfrith's patronage, since it was 'certainly improbable that he would have found time to undertake the task himself during the busy period of his episcopate'.[60] Yet she later revised this opinion, seeing the 'special dignity' of working on such an important project as an honour bestowed on Eadfrith at a more advanced stage in his ecclesiastical career; it is plausible, then, that

he wrote and illuminated the Lindisfarne Gospels himself around 710–20.[61]

So what was Eadfrith's role in reshaping universal Christianity within the Northumbrian micro-Christendom? How was his body and his perception involved in this process? We have already seen how Cuthbert's feats of physical endurance substantiated the existence of God, but what of similar feats by Eadfrith? If indeed the Lindisfarne Gospels represent the work of this single artist–scribe, as thought likely, then their creation must have involved immense dedication, endurance and pain. It has been described as a 'body-racking, muscle-aching, eye-straining task' made worse by wind and rain and cold.[62] It is possible to compare this with Cuthbert standing in freezing seawater or retreating to an island to battle demons. The role of *miles Christi* was bestowed on the scribe by Cassiodorus, who said that each word written by the monastic scribe was a wound on Satan's body.[63] It is a spiritual struggle, but a physical struggle too. Whereas Cuthbert's endurance is perceived, told, described, rewritten and retold, Eadfrith's endurance manifests itself in the beautiful work of the gospel book, which in turn makes the body of God perceptible and transmits the Word. The labour (and therefore the toil and pain) of Eadfrith is situated within the context of an apostolic mission which had 'reached the farthest ends of the known world … where a Christian people carried the Word of God still further northwards while showing the old centre, the Mediterranean, that they were no provincial outpost'.[64] Hence the artist–scribe plays a key part in the construction of a micro-Christendom. In his work – which is itself a product of his body, its endurance, ache, coldness, stiffness – wider Christianity is reshaped and made perceptible within a specific time and place.

The Word of God is not only made perceptible as a result of Eadfrith's work but is meditated on as part of the process of its creation. The artwork of the Lindisfarne Gospels can be seen as a series of visual riddles, symbolic representations of spiritual mysteries which must be perceived and penetrated. Even as the scribe brings the Word of God to the edges of the world and makes that edge a new centre, so an illustrated Insular manuscript integrates word and image. Unlike the marginalia of later medieval manuscripts, in the Lindisfarne Gospels images existed not at the edges, but within the sacred Word itself – Word here as both Letter and Logos incarnate.[65] The creation of such visual art, amalgamated as it is with the Word, is a form of meditative prayer, or *ruminatio*. The cross-carpet pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels have been

compared to prayer labyrinths.[66] The initial pages serve a similar function, whereby the X, P and I of the chi-rho page stand for a name (the initial letters of Christ) but also a symbol and a body (the X as a cross; the intersecting P and I as a haloed figure).[67]

When the maker 'loses' himself in this complexity during painting he meditates on the Word by penetrating the name and body of Christ, delving ever deeper, following loops and knots and laces with his eyes, with his hand, forming birds and beasts and many smaller crosses as their bodies intersect; maybe he also masticates and digests the letters as he illustrates them, memorising and uttering aloud, until letters become words which reveal the Word. Even as the artist–scribe creates, his creation starts to take on a life of its own, shaping the shaper – as a Northumbrian Christian – in return.

In the process of its creation, the gospel book stares back at Eadfrith and offers him a special glimpse into the divine from his scriptorium on the island of Lindisfarne. Of course, the results of that process would have been received by a wider Northumbrian audience. The Latin text of the gospels tells the story of a universal saviour, Christ, but each gospel is preceded by an evangelist portrait page, a decorated cross-carpet page, and an initial page. The carpet pages deserve special attention, for I would argue that, where the Latin text communicates the universality of Christ, these pages serve to make a widespread Christian symbol – the cross – particular to the place of their creation, by visually referencing the absent body of Christ in a Northumbrian artistic and cultural context. Indeed, the cross was becoming 'a key sign for the Northumbrians' in the seventh and eighth centuries, and the account of Oswald's erection of a wooden cross at Heavenfield, as recounted by Bede, may be 'an illustration of a burgeoning Northumbrian interest in the idea of the cross'.[68] The carpet pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels may well be linked to the early stages of this interest.

How, then, do the carpet pages particularise the cross? For a start, one can see that the crosses are comprised of intertwined birds and beasts. In one sense, these animals recall early Christian inhabited vine scrolls in which all of creation feeds on the true vine, the tree of life. This, of course, is the cross depicted as a universal Christian symbol. But there are local attributes here, also. Any visitor to the Northumbrian coast and its islands 'can hardly fail to be aware of the richness of wildlife of the region' and, while Eadfrith is likely to have seen and been inspired by a Mediterranean

model, the birds of the Lindisfarne Gospels 'clearly have characteristics with which he himself felt at home'.[69] Although the birds may not be 'naturalistic' in the modern sense, they are nonetheless familiar to the Northumbrian environment. The paired birds and hounds on the Mark carpet page may serve a similar function to the beasts depicted at the feet of Christ on the Ruthwell and Bewcastle monuments, whereby the Saviour is recognised by the beasts.[70] Parallels may be drawn, therefore, between such iconography and the scene discussed above in the anonymous *Life of St Cuthbert*, when the sea animals (identified as *lutraeae* or 'otters' by Bede) minister to the saint, washing and warming his feet. The involvement of animals credible in a Northumbrian setting and the persistently popular view of Cuthbert as a friend to otters, seals and eider ducks reinforces the idiosyncrasy of this scene.[71] Just as we have, in the Lindisfarne Gospels, beasts and birds with a hint of the Northumbrian about them recognising Christ (as cross), so too Cuthbert, a Northumbrian saint, is recognised (as Christ-like) by the animals of that land. Additionally, the role of the beasts in recognising Christ takes us back to the process of making a gospel book from animal bodies. These nonhuman inhabitants of Northumbria are drawn towards the Saviour in their land, but at the same time their presence – as vellum, as literary and artistic figures – localises that universal Saviour.

The effect of the carpet pages, with their interlace design and paradoxical patterns, is also reminiscent of Germanic metalwork, and the texture of the interwoven colours calls to mind rich eastern silks, so that the crosses display both wealth and power. Certainly the carpet pages, with their emulation of raised glass bosses, remind one of the metalwork processional crosses used in an Insular milieu; but their zoomorphs and step and fret patterns also resemble the Sutton Hoo shoulder clasps.[72] Riddle 26 evinces the visible connections between metalwork and manuscript adornment, when the gospel book explains: 'forþon me gliwedon / wrætlic weorc smiþa, wire bifongen' [thus am I enriched by the wondrous work of smiths, wound about with wire] (13b–14). The possible transfer of technique between smith and illuminator itself lends the Lindisfarne Gospels a kind of mysterious power when one considers the status of the smith in Germanic legend, attested to by the appearance of the mythic Wayland on the Franks Casket and his mention in *Beowulf*, in which the hero's mail coat is said to be 'Welandes geweorc' (455). Although Anglo-Saxon smiths could often be viewed as liminal figures who possessed magical

powers of transformation and practised a closed and hidden art, Christianity gradually directed the skills of someone like Billfrith, who contributed his talents in metalworking to the adornment of the Lindisfarne Gospels, towards the service of the Church.[73]

The status of the metalworker is transferred onto the wearer. Personal ornament as a display of wealth and power was intensely important to a nobleman of Anglo-Saxon England, who might wear on his person the value of a considerable estate.[74] It was not only secular rulers, either: a fact confirmed by the *sindonis* in which Cuthbert's body was to be wrapped after death. The patterns and colours of the carpet pages can be compared to 'the sort of elaborate, exotic embroidered silks and woven braids of eastern manufacture in which the incorrupt remains of St Cuthbert were reverently wrapped'.[75] As such, the crosses of the Lindisfarne Gospels can be said to 'wear' power and wealth. This power is thereby transferred to the body of Christ, as cross, but nevertheless remains intricately bound up with the upper levels of Northumbrian society and the kind of ornament they chose to adorn their own bodies with.

Access to high-status material things can bring one closer to God within Northumbria; and closeness to God brings one closer to the higher echelons of Northumbrian society. This is clearly demonstrated by the display of the cross-carpet pages. It is not difficult to detect an element of gift exchange from such display. We need not think of such giving and receiving in purely earth-bound terms; the custom could also be projected into the realm of the supernatural, as wealth and treasure was bestowed on God, Christ and the saints. In this manner, economic capital (i.e. gold, silver, gems, silks) could be converted into symbolic capital (i.e. divine approval). As Julia Smith puts it, 'In the early Middle Ages, material wealth and political power had flowed along channels that were secular, sacred, or both simultaneously'. In this world 'where resources were hard-won but easily dissipated, their possession was one of the defining characteristics of the religious and lay elite' who 'used their wealth to display their status; uphold and reinforce their honour; establish and strengthen their ties to lord, rulers, and the saints in heaven'.[76] The wealth worn by the carpet pages of the gospel book, then, not only reflects the power of the Northumbrian elite but reveals the power of Christ, the power of God, who, upon receipt of Northumbrian riches, bestows approval and symbolic capital on the gift-givers. Of course, it was only the Northumbrian elite – ecclesiastical and aristocratic – who were in a position to lavish such wealth on God, and receive His favour, in the first place.

Therefore, even as the Lindisfarne Gospels reshape Christianity for Northumbria by clothing the cross in regional ornament, they limit accessibility to that Christianity, creating a restricted micro-Christendom in which only those who possess material wealth may fully partake.

This is in keeping with the Lindisfarne Gospels' status as an inspirational but relatively inaccessible focal point.[77] We may think back to Eadfrith's privileged position as creator of the manuscript art, how he was able to meditate on the labyrinthine play of crosses within crosses while writing and painting their pages, and compare this to the less available display of the gospel book once it had left the scriptorium, for the Lindisfarne Gospels themselves 'may not have been available for detailed study to many, even if visible as a source of inspiration at the shrine and on the altar on special feast days'.[78] Thus, the reshaped Christianity depicted in the Lindisfarne Gospels is limited even further. Who had the power to perceive the book and who had the power to read, interpret and penetrate it? There are multiple issues to consider here. For one, who could actually get close enough to the gospel book to view it? We know that, throughout its afterlife, St Cuthbert's body had the ability to draw pilgrims from far and wide but that, at the same time, the Cuthbertian community controlled access to said body from the seventh to the twelfth century and beyond.[79] Would the custodians of the Lindisfarne Gospels have exercised a similar authority, deciding who could and could not approach its pages? Even if someone did find themselves within viewing distance of the book, would they have had the requisite literacy to read its Latin text? We may again look to the Cuthbertian cult more generally for clues. Latin *vitae* produced in England, for instance, were less assured of an audience than in somewhere like pre-Carolingian Gaul and 'must have been less accessible, comprehensible perhaps only to the educated clergy and a few unusually learned princes and nobles' with a more restricted appeal to ordinary pilgrims.[80]

However, while the Lindisfarne Gospels may have been read by very few, they did display a visual power. Even if it could not always be read, the Word of God could still be seen. Hawkes highlights the manner in which the decorated pages (the evangelist portraits, the cross-carpet pages and the initial pages) present complex visual commentaries on the succeeding Latin text. These pages speak in a visual language, in a 'vernacular artistic language' that 'combines with other visual traditions to serve a symbolic function that draws out the relevance of its setting'. By replicating the way

that 'Germanic and Celtic metalwork presents paradoxical patterns, forcing the viewer to contemplate the forms to understand them, the artist has articulated the value of the Word in a traditional manner, transforming the painted page into the something that both represents and is the subject of the Gospel'.[81] This draws on a different sort of literacy: a visual literacy, bound up with the vernacular arts. And yet, while this visual dimension does particularise the gospels, I would hesitate to say that such artwork widens the book's audience; the effect may be quite the opposite. We have already seen how the carpet pages speak predominantly to those in possession of material wealth, narrowing participation. But the visual language of the gospels speaks even more directly, to an even more specific section of the Northumbrian elite. That is, it speaks to those members of the Northumbrian political and ecclesiastical establishment who supported and rallied to Cuthbert and his cult, as opposed to the Wilfridian camp.

Throughout this chapter, I have repeatedly pointed to the role of Wilfrid and his followers in offering an alternative view of what Northumbrian Christianity could look like. The cult of Wilfrid was undoubtedly a rival to that of Cuthbert, both acting as foci for opposing parties in politico-ecclesiastical conflict.[82] So, how did those in opposition to the Cuthbertian party shape their own, idiosyncratic version of a wider Christianity? In Chapter XVII of the *Life of Wilfrid*, his biographer, Stephen of Ripon, gives us a tantalising glimpse of what a rival gospel book might have looked like, describing letters of purest gold on empurpled parchment and a golden case set with precious gems.[83] While the Lindisfarne Gospels are still with us, as an existing artefact, we can be less certain about the appearance of the Wilfridian Gospels, as alluded to in this passage. One can, however, compare them with the eighth-century Canterbury Codex Aureus, now in Stockholm, which displays purple pages with gold crosses embedded in the text. A still more apt comparison may be found with the Codex Amiatinus, which is closer in time and location to the Wilfridian Gospels. Folios 4r. and 4v. of Amiatinus were written in a yellow pigment, orpiment, on purple-stained vellum, corresponding to Stephen's description of Wilfrid's book.[84] Both the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Codex Amiatinus are Northumbrian manuscripts, produced at about the same time. Yet their difference in appearance demonstrates that versions of Christianity could vary not only from region to region but also within each region. Both Lindisfarne and Amiatinus are Northumbrian things, but they speak of and to

different Northumbrias, of and to conflicting micro-Christendoms. The gold lettering on purple pages described in the *Life of Wilfrid* is in keeping with his Romanising interests during his brief leadership of Lindisfarne. Such decoration offers a striking contrast to the zoomorphic interlace and Germanic metalwork effects evident in the Lindisfarne Gospels. And so the textual allusion to Wilfrid's Gospels, and the extant parallels, encourage us to recognise that, although the Lindisfarne Gospels are distinctly Northumbrian, they are a restricted and restricting version of Northumbria. Wilfrid's Gospels show that, even within the higher echelons of society, other Northumbrias could and did exist, with the capability of producing different kinds of material things.

A portable assembly: the relics of St Cuthbert across time

Following Viking raids on the island in 875, the bodily remains and associated relics of St Cuthbert would not only accompany the Lindisfarne community on its wanderings around northern England but actively dictate the course of their travels – as when St Cuthbert's gospel book leapt overboard before the community could cross to Ireland, redirecting them, and then emerging miraculously undamaged by the water, its pages incorrupt, like the body of the saint. What was more, the persistent presence of the saint's corpse helped to ease the uprooting of the community from Lindisfarne by gathering other things – body parts and artefacts that evoked memories of the past – into its sacred space. Indeed, the saint's coffin would come to house an assemblage of disparate relics, both human and nonhuman, from a gospel book and pectoral cross to the head of King Oswald and the bones of Bede. Across space and time, the body continued to act as a portable assembly, with the magnetic ability to draw the living towards it – pilgrims in search of healing and felons in need of sanctuary, priests offering worship and kings seeking favour – while also acting as a sort of force field, barring and excluding others – notably, women were later excluded from this sacred space in twelfth-century Durham.

For it was in Durham that the community of Cuthbert would finally cease their wanderings and establish a new home. And it was in Durham, in 1104, as the new Anglo-Norman cathedral was being built, that the monks would open the coffin up once more, inspect the body of St Cuthbert, and find it to be incorrupt, looking as if asleep, giving off sweet smells, the bones solid, the flesh soft, the limbs still bendy. On the one hand, the tangible realness

of the body allowed those monks to reach backwards through time and perceive the historic seventh-century past. On the other hand, the incorruptible body, by dint of not displaying the passage of time, allowed multiple temporalities to coexist. Perpetually poised between life and death, activity and slumber, St Cuthbert could carry the past into the present – his still incorrupt corpse forever fixed in a former time yet, quite literally, flexible enough to endure into the future.

Notes

1 Michelle Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 34–5. The 'Celtic' tradition refers to the Irish-oriented Columban monasticism that combined spiritual retreat with pastoral outreach, first established at Lindisfarne under Bishop Aidan; the 'new order' opted for by King Oswy at Whitby sought a more unified English Church displaying greater conformity to Rome.
2 Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, trans. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001). See also Vin Nardizzi, 'Remembering Premodern Environs', in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Julian Yates (eds), *Object Oriented Environs* (Earth: Punctum Books, 2016), pp. 179–83.
3 Sherry Turkle (ed.), *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).
4 For a general overview, see James Paz, 'Lindisfarne Gospels', in Siân Echard and Robert Rouse (eds), *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopaedia of British Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming).
5 I follow Ingold by refusing to make a sharp division between landscape and artefacts. See Ingold, *Being Alive*, pp. 20–2. He also insists here that the human body partakes of the material world, along with all the diverse forms of animal, plant, fungal and bacterial life.
6 Turkle (ed.), *Evocative Objects*, pp. 3–10.
7 For further discussion of the historical contexts and the relationship between the *Lives of St Cuthbert* in form and content, see B. Colgrave (ed. and trans.), *Two Lives of Cuthbert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. 1–5.
8 Julia M. H. Smith, *Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History 500–1000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 223–4.
9 Clare A. Lees makes this point in *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), especially ch. 4.
10 Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 355–9.
11 Benedicta Ward, SLG, 'The Spirituality of St Cuthbert', in Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert,*

His Cult and Community (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1989), pp. 65–76, at 65.

12 Colgrave (ed.), *Two Lives of Cuthbert*, p. 4.

13 References to the anonymous *Life* are taken from Colgrave (ed.), *Two Lives of Cuthbert*, pp. 59–139.

14 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 200, 209.

15 Ibid., p. 212.

16 Ibid., p. 213.

17 Ibid.

18 The anonymous *Life* does not actually refer to the freezing coldness of the North Sea, other than to say that the sea animals warmed the saint's feet with their breath. Yet this coldness may be easily evoked for the modern reader; I invite you to visit the north-east coast of Britain.

19 Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, p. 217.

20 Alan Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', in Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, pp. 103–22, at 112.

21 Clare Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville (eds), *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21–46, at 29.

22 Ibid., p. 41.

23 Alfred K. Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), p. 97.

24 Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', p. 28.

25 Siewers, *Strange Beauty*, p. 97.

26 References to Bede's prose *Life of St Cuthbert* are taken from Colgrave (ed.), *Two Lives of Cuthbert*, pp. 141–307.

27 The anonymous writer of the first *Life* was indeed influenced by Evagrius' translation of Athanasius' *Life of St Antony*; see Colgrave's introduction to the *Two Lives*, p. 11.

28 David W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 97.

29 Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing (eds), *A Place to Believe in: Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2006), p. 19.

30 Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 359–60.

31 Ibid., pp. 360–1.

32 Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 34.

33 Ibid.

34 Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', p. 119.

35 Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 34.

36 Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', p. 121.
37 See Thacker, 'Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', p. 119, and Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 64–5.
38 For dating see Walter Berschin, 'Opus deliberatum ac perfectum: Why Did the Venerable Bede Write a Second Prose Life of St Cuthbert?', in Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, pp. 95–102, at 95.
39 Colgrave (ed.), *Two Lives of Cuthbert*, p. 4.
40 Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', p. 120.
41 Ibid.
42 Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, p. 14.
43 Turkle (ed.), *Evocative Objects*, pp. 5–10.
44 See Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.24, IV.26, ed. Colgrave and Mynors.
45 J. F. Webb, in his translation of Bede, renders it simply as 'cloth'; but according to Campbell it is sometimes translated as 'muslin'.
46 J. Campbell, 'Elements in the Background to the Life of St Cuthbert and his Early Cult', in Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, pp. 3–19, at 17.
47 Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', p. 105.
48 See Dr James Raine's description in *St Cuthbert, with an Account of the State in which his Remains were found upon the Opening of his Tomb in Durham Cathedral, in the year 1827* (Durham, 1828), p. 211.
49 Elizabeth Coatsworth, 'The Pectoral Cross and Portable Altar from the Tomb of St Cuthbert', in Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, pp. 287–301, at 295, 296.
50 Ibid., p. 293.
51 To view the illuminated pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels in detail, visit www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/lindisfarne/ttp.html.
52 Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 200.
53 Christopher de Hamel, *Medieval Craftsmen: Scribes and Illuminators* (London: British Museum Press, 1992), p. 8.
54 Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 201.
55 Ingold, *Being Alive*, pp. 24–6.
56 Niles proposes that 'gospel book' is a more apt and precise solution to this riddle than 'book' or 'bible' in *Old English Enigmatic Poems*, pp. 117–19.
57 Description by Jane Hawkes, 'The Lindisfarne Gospels', in Tim Ayers (ed.), *The History of British Art: 600–1600* (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), pp. 198–9.
58 Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 280–1. Details of the Raman laser project are provided in the appendix, pp. 430–51.

59 Aldred's colophon may be viewed via the British Library's online gallery at www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/lindisfarne/accessible/pages31and32.html. Transcription and translation provided in Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 102–4.
60 Michelle Brown, 'The Lindisfarne Scriptorium from the Late Seventh to the Early Ninth Century', in Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, pp. 151–63, at 154.
61 Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 106–9.
62 Ibid., p. 4.
63 Cassiodorus, *De institutione divinarum litterarum*, ch. 30; see A. Fridh (ed.), *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori variarum libri XII*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 96 (Turnhout: Brepolis, 1973).
64 Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 8.
65 See Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion, 1992), p. 18.
66 Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 324.
67 See www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/lindisfarne/accessible/pages11and12.html.
68 Orton and Wood with Lees, *Fragments of History*, p. 172; and see also Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.2, ed. Colgrave and Mynors.
69 Janet Backhouse, 'Birds, Beasts and Initials in Lindisfarne's Gospel Books', in Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, pp. 166–7.
70 See Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 328.
71 As discussed by Janet Backhouse in 'Birds, Beasts and Initials', p. 169.
72 See Hawkes, 'The Lindisfarne Gospels', p. 198.
73 David A. Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 80:1 (1998), 3–22, at 17.
74 J. Campbell, 'Elements in the Background to the Life of St Cuthbert and his Early Cult', p. 9.
75 Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 307.
76 Smith, *Europe after Rome*, pp. 213–14.
77 Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, p. 383.
78 Ibid., p. 380.
79 See David Hall, 'The Sanctuary of St Cuthbert', in Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe (eds), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, pp. 425, 426, 436.
80 Thacker, 'Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', p. 109.
81 Hawkes, 'The Lindisfarne Gospels', p. 199.
82 Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 113.
83 See Stephen of Ripon, *Life of Wilfrid*, ch. XVII.
84 Richard Marsden provides a description of Codex Amiatinus in *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 108–23.