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Mathew Kuefler, *The Making and Unmaking of a Saint: Hagiography and Memory in the Cult of Gerald of Aurillac*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. 306 pp. Maps, figures, notes, bibliography, and index. \$79.95 U.S. (hb). ISBN 978-0-8122-4552-3.

Response by Mathew Kuefler, San Diego State University.

All scholars must rely on the findings of others. Nonetheless, we should not be afraid to challenge even long-held beliefs when our investigations lead us there. Steven Vanderputten's review of my book implies that I am wrong to have rejected the scholarly consensus about the dating and authorship of the writings about Saint Gerald. Yet I am not the first to do so. Indeed, as I note in my first chapter, the first scholar to analyze the two versions of the *Vita sancti Geraldi* (Jean-Barthélemy Hauréau, in 1874) also concluded that Odo had authored the briefer version. His opinion was overturned by the Bollandist Albert Poncelet in 1895, who readily admitted that his judgement was "a matter of appreciation, of impression, and it might appear up to a certain point an explanation based on feelings [*une raison de sentiment*]", that is to say, the worst sort of critical arguments" (quoted in my book, p. 13). Consider how these tentative conclusions by Poncelet have become more fixed over time precisely by not being reconsidered. In the words of Anne-Marie Bultot-Verleysen, the editor of the recent critical edition of the longer version, "Poncelet has been able to establish on solid bases that the long version was truly the original work" (quoted in my book, p. 14). So it is precisely this assumption I wished to challenge.

Vanderputten suggests that I ignore the work of numerous scholars. Yet all but the last named are included in my bibliography, Rachel Stone's book having appeared after mine was in production. The first scholar he names, Isabelle Rosé, I cite nine times in chapter one and fifteen times in chapter two. He admits that "it is a good idea not to weigh down a book with overlong historiographical debate," and it is true that my editors at the University of Pennsylvania Press insisted that I shift my comments on the work of other scholars to the endnotes, which unfortunately makes them less accessible. I did not want to separate them from the text, but I had no choice in the matter.

More disconcertingly, Vanderputten states that I refused to engage with the ideas of these scholars. He says that I "opted to largely ignore recent discussions of Odo's views on ascetic virility and lay piety," for example, yet I devoted an entire section of chapter two to that very topic, among many other mentions throughout chapters two and three, and included in the notes to this section are over a dozen recent scholarly works specifically on these matters.

Vanderputten faults me for not comparing the writings about Saint Gerald to other writings by Odo of Cluny and Ademar of Chabannes. Yet I raise this problem directly, albeit in an abbreviated discussion of a longer analysis I made in a more technical article published elsewhere that I cite and attempt to summarize, mostly in the notes. Simply put, the results are inconclusive. There are simply too many questions about the authenticity of the writings attributed to both. So, as I point out in the extensive notes to these pages, Isabelle Rosé (again, one of the scholars I am supposed to be ignoring) claimed that the *Vita sancti Gregorii episcopi Turonensis* was authored by Odo of Cluny, and that it contains some

remarkable parallels to the briefer *Vita sancti Geraldi*. There are also some interesting repetitions of unusual terms found in the longer version of the *Vita sancti Geraldi* and in the second sermon attributed to Odo of Cluny, but Dominique Iogna-Prat (another of the scholars I am said to ignore) doubts that it was written by him. So it makes little sense to use one uncertain attribution to prove or disprove another. It is even unclear whether one of the longest works we have by Odo of Cluny, the *Epitome moralium in Job*, is actually his, at least in the form in which it is published. Nonetheless, I did compare about five hundred words and phrases and I did make some observations on the matter on the basis of word usage and parallels in themes and even with metaphors and literary allusions used. All of this information is in the notes.

I understand that, if my thesis is sustained, it will be necessary to re-think the contributions of the many scholars who have contributed to our understanding of the *Vita sancti Geraldi*, Odo of Cluny, and the central Middle Ages more generally. “The implications of such a reappraisal cannot be overstated,” I admitted (p. 11), and gave some examples—although it would hardly have been possible to provide extensive reassessments of a generation of scholarship on monasticism, the cult of saints, lay piety, and more in this book. I did try to suggest where the analysis of some scholars who have provided the most detailed studies in the field might be reused: since the extended version of the *Vita sancti Geraldi* incorporated most elements of the briefer version, not everything that has been said about Odo’s ideas from the extended version are necessarily wrong if applied instead to the briefer version.

What is most surprising about Vanderputten’s rejection of my reinterpretations, however, is what he does not seek to rebut. He does not address the anachronisms in the longer version, for example, such the mention of a Count of Turenne that is supposed to have been made by Odo of Cluny, despite the fact that the office did not exist until almost a half-century after Odo’s death. He does not bring up the factual errors in the longer version, such as calling Gerald a count—an error difficult to imagine as having been made in Aurillac only a decade or two after Gerald’s death, but more easily understood if that version was made away from Aurillac and a century after Gerald’s death. He does not note the many references to Limoges and to its patron Saint Martial in the longer version, which would seem to tie it to that location. He does not repeat what I said about the difficulties of reconciling the archeological record at Aurillac with what is said in the longer version, if it was indeed written at Aurillac in the early tenth century. He does not answer the question as to why, if the briefer version is a later condensation of the longer version, the first two books should have been so drastically altered—in wording, in arrangement, and in content—while the last two books were left unaltered. And he does not wonder, as even Poncelet did, why the frequent mentions of Gerald as a saint in the longer version should all have been omitted when the text was abridged, if that is truly what happened. All these and the many more textual and contextual problems with the scholarly consensus that I point out in my book are overlooked—as they have been for too long.

In the end, scholarship cannot move forward with a blind adherence to the consensus of the past. My book may not be perfect, and my argument may not be persuasive to all, but it deserved a more open-minded reading.

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