

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

Duke Bretislav lays down the law

April 9, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

Cosmas of Prague (c.1045-1125) was a priest of Bohemian noble lineage, who wrote one of the central sources on Bohemian history from pagan times to Christianization and the reigns of the Přemyslid dukes up until Vladislaus I — the *Chronica Boemorum*, translated into English as the *Chronicle of the Czechs*.

Book II contains one of the most striking passages that I know of, when Duke Bretislav I in front of his *comites* and the bishop Severus, lays down a brief but powerful set of laws with the aim of definitively breaking down the last remnants of barbaric and decadent pagan customs that had still remained after the conversion of Duke Borivoj I in 884. As such, it serves as a very useful source to underline the uniquely civilizing aspects of the Christian religion on European peoples.

This occurs sometime in 1039 (“the fourth year of the duke’s reign”) during a Bohemian raid on Poland, sacking Krakow and heading to Gniezno, where the Czechs aim to retrieve the relics of Saint Adalbert housed in the basilica of the Holy Mary. Their bishop, Severus, admonishes them to do fasting and penance for three days and three nights before touching the relics. At first the Czechs disobey their bishop, whereupon divine retaliation is immediately exacted when they become blinded, “having neither voice nor sense nor sight for a space of almost three hours, until they again regained their original faculties by God’s grace.”

On the third night, Severus receives a vision from Saint Adalbert: “Say this to the duke and his *comites*: ‘Your father in heaven will grant what you ask, if you do not repeat the evil deeds which you renounced at the baptismal font.’” Severus shares this message, and on the next day as the retinue enters the Church of St. Mary, Duke Bretislav rises to the pulpit, and speaks:

Then Duke Břetislav, extending his hand over the holy tomb, spoke thus to the crowd of people: "Brothers, extend your right hands similarly to God and heed my words, which I want you to confirm by swearing on your baptism. Let this therefore be my first and greatest decree: that your marriages, which until now you have treated as brothels and common to all, like brute animals, henceforth be legitimate, private, and insoluble, according to the canons. Thus a man should live content with only one wife and a woman with one husband. If a wife should spurn her husband, or a husband his wife, or the quarrel between them boil over to the point of separation, I do not want the violator in this matter—the one unwilling to return to the earlier bond legitimately celebrated—to be reduced to servitude according to the rite of our land. Instead, by the stricture of our immutable decree, whatever his rank, he should be exiled into Hungary. And by no means let it be permitted that he redeem himself with money or return to this land, lest the taint of one small sheep spread though the all of Christ's sheepfold." Bishop Severus said: "Whoever might do otherwise, let him be anathema.

Virgins, widows, and adulteresses, who are known to have lost their good name, to have corrupted their modesty, and to be considered harlots, are to be punished by this same judgment. For when they have the free choice of marriage, why do they commit adultery and abort their fetuses, which is the worst crime of crimes?" Then the duke spoke, adding: "If a woman truly proclaims that for her part she is not loved equally, but is severely beaten and debased by her husband, let a judgment of God be held between them and let the one who is found guilty pay the penalty in the matter."

"Likewise, concerning those who are accused of homicides, the archpriest will write down their names for the *comes* of that burg and the *comes* will summon them. And if they are rebels [and refuse], he will put them in prison until they perform a fitting penance or, if they deny it, until they are examined by hot iron or blessed water to determine whether they are blameworthy. Regarding fratricides, parricides, killers of priests, and those caught in capital crimes of this sort, the archpriest shall consign them to the *comes* or the duke, or he will eject them from the realm shackled by the hands and around the stomach, so that they might wander the earth as fugitives and wanderers in the likeness of Cain." Bishop Severus said: "Let the duke's just decision be strengthened by anathema. For this reason the sword hangs on the thigh for you dukes, so that you might more often wash your hands in the blood of the sinner."

Again, the duke: "The tavern is the root of all evil and from it proceed thefts, murders, adulteries, and other evils. Whoever keeps one or buys what is prepared there..." "...Let him be anathema," Bishop Severus said. And the duke said: "Let the tavern-keeper who is apprehended as a violator of this decree be hanged on a stake in the middle of the market and flayed to the point of the herald's nausea. However, his goods should not be confiscated but thrown to the ground, lest someone be sullied by the accursed drink. So also drinkers, if they are caught, shall not leave prison until they each put three hundred coins into the duke's treasury." Bishop Severus said: "What the duke declares, our authority affirms."

Still the duke continued, saying: "We forbid altogether for markets to be open on Sundays, which they should celebrate all the more since they are free to work on the remaining days. If someone should be discovered in any servile work, either on Sundays or on feast days, the accused shall be brought publicly to the church and the archpriest shall take away both the work itself and the draught animal found in the work. The offender will also pay three hundred coins into the duke's treasury. Likewise, those who bury their dead in fields or forests: those so accused shall pay a cow to the archdeacon and three hundred coins to the duke's treasury. Then they should bury the dead

anew in a cemetery of the faithful. These are things God hates. For these things, a disgusted Saint Adalbert abandoned us, his flock, and preferred to go teach foreign peoples. We confirm by our oath and yours that we will no longer do these things.” Thus spoke the duke.

The reform of marriage, the imposition of monogamy and strict prohibition of infanticide are certainly the most notable and ultimately the most significant. The sexual revolution is doing a good job so far at reversing all of this, and the feminist project of “sexual liberation” will indeed lead to marriages (such as they are) again being “treated as brothels and common to all, like brute animals.” On the other hand, the current “red pill”/MRM consensus seems to celebrate this state of affairs, as it will supposedly lead to a Darwinian restoration of sexual market equilibrium over time. I am not at all convinced of this.

The ire against taverns as dens of vice and immorality bring me back to a comment exchange I had with Walter Devereux (of Thermidor), when he pointed out that the brothel and the theater were often located in the same part of town, and that besides prostitution, brothels were the caterers of many other sinful activities that most of us now consider harmless recreation. Well, this passage in the *Chronica Boemorum* is probably the best illustration of this that I know of.

The establishment of cemeteries to bury the dead are now something we take for granted. The proper observance of the Sabbath, on the other hand, is eroded, but there are signs of life as with Poland and its recent reinstatement of Sunday shopping laws. On the other hand, the current arrangement of the international state system has made the punishment of exile a quaint anachronism.

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12 thoughts on “Duke Bretislav lays down the law”

1. Vladimir says:

[April 9, 2018 at 2:23 pm](#)

“So also drinkers, if they are caught, shall not leave prison until they each put three hundred coins into the duke’s treasury.”

This part sounds to me like a legalized racket, rather than some exalted civilization-building measure.

“the brothel and the theater were often located in the same part of town”

The funny thing is, the idea of a brothel is nowadays seen as far more scandalous and intolerable (at least in the Anglosphere) than it was anywhere in Europe centuries ago. While at the same time, the theater and the sordid kinds of people who inevitably staff it have been exalted to the position of first-rank public dignitaries and moral authorities.

Reply.

◦ marcusmontisursinensis says:

[April 10, 2018 at 6:28 pm](#)

St. Augustine thought brothels should be tolerated to avoid greater evil [which would be rape or abduction or even sodomy and incest]. Aquinas reiterates Augustine’s opinion. It must be clear, however, that with married peasant men visiting prostitutes only greater evil is committed, an

none avoided. On the other hand, in case younger widowers, sailors or soldiers some horrible sins might be avoided [in case of widowers, an imprudential hasty marriage for the sake of getting carnal pleasures might lead to non-carnal sins and to various antisocial consequences].

The question of time preference is also of extreme importance. When a gentleman visits a harlot, there is a substantial probability that he will not leave his wife and that he will ensure discretion for the sake of his children. When high-time-preference 10th century peasant visits a brothel in the village nearby, everyone knows it, including his wife and children, he falls in love and abandons his wife, in a few months gets stabbed by someone else who fell in love with the harlot, or gets stabbed by his fifteen-year-old son.

Considering the theater, the high status of actors and actresses coincides with the age when painters and sculptors stopped being perceived as craftsmen, but instead became “artists”, men gifted with an extraordinary character and of high creative power, cool people and dandy rebels liked by girls. And actors were much lower than painters or composers.

Reply

2. Pingback: [Duke Bretislav lays down the law | Reaction Times](#)

3. Thorfinnsson says:

[April 9, 2018 at 3:07 pm](#)

The reform of marriage, the imposition of monogamy and strict prohibition of infanticide are certainly the most notable and ultimately the most significant. The sexual revolution is doing a good job so far at reversing all of this, and the feminist project of “sexual liberation” will indeed lead to marriages (such as they are) again being “treated as brothels and common to all, like brute animals.” On the other hand, the current “red pill”/MRM consensus seems to celebrate this state of affairs, as it will supposedly lead to a Darwinian restoration of sexual market equilibrium over time. I am not at all convinced of this.

There are a number of Christian writers in the “red pill” movement who specifically call for the reimposition of monogamy, premarital chastity, male headship, and other traditional customs of marriage.

The best example is Dalrock: <https://dalrock.wordpress.com/>

The “red pill” movement in general simply recognizes that the sexual revolution (and its antecedents) have completely succeeded in destroying marriage and family. Every marriage in every industrial country is now a farce which can be dissolved at any time for any reason. The people who get “married” have usually already treated themselves as brothels for years prior to their so-called marriage.

Marriage as it was once understood generally only exists now among the Amish, Mennonites, Mormons, the Society of Saint Pius X, etc.

Reply

◦ [Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur](#) says:

[April 9, 2018 at 6:29 pm](#)

I’m aware of Dalrock. Yes, there are some elements of the subculture who have ostensible tradcon leanings (though they spend much of their time slinging mud in that general direction), but my point is it’s more of an aesthetic choice, since the underlying framework of Darwinism and sexual selection theory can be used to underpin all sorts of conclusions, and most of the time it’s advocacy of the soft polygamy/cad lifestyle. The “old social contract” as Rollo Tomassi calls it is mostly held in contempt.

I have yet to see anyone actually have a substantial command of pre-modern Christian understandings of women's roles in society, as for instance discussed by the Franciscan Catalan friar Francesc Eiximenis. But really, this is a separate subject all on its own.

Reply

- Thorfinnsson says:

April 9, 2018 at 6:51 pm

I don't want to embrace ecumenism here, but the framework of Darwinism and sociosexual selection theory elegantly explains sexual differences and reproductive strategy. What one does with this knowledge depends on one's own values. Likewise the Bible quite well explains the nature of women and the duty of headship, and unlike with modern scientific theories the reader is not left to draw his own conclusions.

The community, naturally, tends towards hedonism and libertinism. The whole thing got started out of the frustrations of men who just wanted to score. Over time however it produced deeper insights, and so there's been a traditionalist and conservative drift over time. The writings of someone like Roosh today compared to a decade ago show a remarkable transformation.

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Obviously we came into this from a different path, so we're less knowledgeable on this.

I genuinely do not know who that is, so I looked him up. I presume the work you are referring to is *Llibre de les dones*. It appears not to exist in any language I can read.

On the other hand many supposedly traditionalist Christians are simply delusional about the nature of women, despite plenty of scripture about it. Things may be better in the Catholic and Orthodox churches, but the Protestant denominations are simply awful. Protestant pastors actually make a living by essentially telling men to submit to their wives' henpecking, and claim that not only will it get them laid but that it's what God intended.

Reply

- Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur says:

April 9, 2018 at 7:41 pm

The framework is useful for drawing various formal distinctions, but any behavioral predictions are conjectural. Above all, the pretense of it explaining the universal nature of females is shoddy. I haven't seen anyone in the MRM actually seriously tackle the issues of industrialization, the displacement of seigneurial agriculture, the decline of non-free labor and patrimonial lordship, the decline of clerical control, the rise of civic equality and the destruction of hereditary social orders, etc. as factors in the current sexual market. For all their claim to have rejected egalitarianism and to have accepted the necessity of hierarchy, they don't seem to know much about it. They understand inequality purely in biological terms, and since those models by themselves do not take into account the actual social ecology, a lot of MRM analysis reads like economic reasoning from oversimplified premises.

Since most pre-modern thought on women is not as brute and animalistic as that of the MRM, they have now taken to a sort of theory that the writers of chivalric romances were the “first cucks” who took away the gnosis on women from Western civilization for many centuries before the MRM rediscovered or rather reinvented it. Never mind that some of the earliest chivalric poems (like those of Andreas Capellanus) were satires meant to make fun of debauched nobles and to reinforce ideals of strict canonical monogamy, but the idea that perhaps the very different social circumstances meant that female pathologies simply did not manifest in the same way as they do now, is quite offensive to their sociobiological claim to universality. Of course, much of the modern internet HBD synthesis is nonsense (like the utterly discredited idea of the “Hajnal line”), but once again — a separate subject all on its own.

Reply.

o Michael Rothblatt says:

April 10, 2018 at 4:57 pm

>Since most pre-modern thought on women is not as brute and animalistic as that of the MRM, they have now taken to a sort of theory that the writers of chivalric romances were the “first cucks”

But medieval Europeans certainly were the first cucks. Popes advised men to marry ex-prostitutes! What more is there to be said? Well, that they were also the first feminists. Can you imagine women like Héloïse and Empress Irene in, say, medieval China? Or, anywhere else save Europe for that matter?

Reply.

o T. Greer says:

May 5, 2018 at 7:19 am

“Can you imagine women like Heloise in medieval China?”

Yes. Such women were a favorite topic of imperial annalists going all the way back to Sima Qian, and there were entire novels devoted to the topic from the Ming forward.

Like NTSS, I am unimpressed with reductionist internet theories that don’t manage to explain current global diversity, much less the diversity of millenia past.

Reply.

4. Thorfinnsson says:

April 12, 2018 at 5:40 pm

The framework is useful for drawing various formal distinctions, but any behavioral predictions are conjectural. Above all, the pretense of it explaining the universal nature of females is shoddy. I haven’t seen anyone in the MRM actually seriously tackle the issues of industrialization, the displacement of seigneurial agriculture, the decline of non-free labor and patrimonial lordship, the decline of clerical control, the rise of civic equality and the destruction of hereditary social orders, etc. as factors in the current sexual market. For all their claim to have rejected egalitarianism and to have accepted the necessity of hierarchy, they don’t seem to know much about it. They understand inequality purely in biological terms, and since those models by themselves do not take into account the actual social ecology, a lot of MRM analysis reads like economistic reasoning from oversimplified premises.

I’m here for a reason. 😏

That said no one, to my knowledge, in the manosphere or alt right rejects the role of social ecology.

The default view of our new priestly class is that heredity is completely irrelevant.

Our view, supported by empirical research, is that is relevant but not the only matter at hand.

The obvious failure of “democracy” is attracting me to legitimist thought. It is quite clear that we will not take power or save ourselves through “populism”.

Since most pre-modern thought on women is not as brute and animalistic as that of the MRM, they have now taken to a sort of theory that the writers of chivalric romances were the “first cucks” who took away the gnosis on women from Western civilization for many centuries before the MRM rediscovered or rather reinvented it. Never mind that some of the earliest chivalric poems (like those of Andreas Capellanus) were satires meant to make fun of debauched nobles and to reinforce ideals of strict canonical monogamy, but the idea that perhaps the very different social circumstances meant that female pathologies simply did not manifest in the same way as they do now, is quite offensive to their sociobiological claim to universality.

The sexual revolution has reduced us once more to animalistic brutes. Ever go to a night club? The sexual display is no different than what lower primates engage in.

We’re well aware that the social circumstances of the past prevented current female pathologies.

But in general on the manosphere and the alt right there is little knowledge about the world before the American and French Revolutions.

There is a bit in places as there are some thinkers who blame our current malaise on Martin Luther, and Southern nationalists have begun to critically examine the American Revolution and are rediscovering the pseudo-legitimist writings of their “Firebreather” ancestors.

Of course, much of the modern internet HBD synthesis is nonsense (like the utterly discredited idea of the “Hajnal line”), but once again — a separate subject all on its own.

Who/what discredited the Hajnal Line?

Reply.

- Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur says:

April 12, 2018 at 6:12 pm

> Who/what discredited the Hajnal Line?

I’ll probably devote a post to it at some point, but very quickly I’ll refer you to the name of Mikolaj Szoltysek, who is one of the leading revisionists in Central and Eastern European demographic history.

Reply.

- Thorfinnsson says:

April 15, 2018 at 12:44 pm

Thanks, I’ll look into him.

The Hajnal Line makes sense to me but I’m skeptical of its boundaries, Finland in particular.

I don't know anything about Finnish marriage history etc. in the past, but I am Swedish and as such know Finns. We call Finns "the Brother Country" and Finland was part of the Swedish Empire for five centuries.

Finns don't act exactly like us, but they are similar in many respects. And Finland is a Western European country which is highly advanced in technology and industry.

But they're allegedly outside of the Hajnal Line?

That means the line itself is drawn wrong, the theory itself is wrong, or there is some kind of special Finnish exception.

Reply.

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