Mark Lutz wants to show in what respect the *Laws* are a ‘defence of political rationalism’ which consists in the fact that the political philosopher is endowed with sufficient knowledge and authority to interpret divine law (p. 3). By the end of the book he seems to strengthen his conclusion so that the political philosopher is said to ‘guide divine law’ (p. 180). Lutz sees Plato’s *Laws* as a text that offers one possible conciliation between the traditions of revelation and rationality which at the same time serves as the justification of political obligation (that seems to be the purpose of his somewhat sketchy historical overview (pp. 4–6)). A further purpose of the book is to ‘recover Plato’s insights into what divine law is and how it shapes the lives of those who live under it’ (p. 7). I am not convinced Mark Lutz sufficiently fulfils this goal; he summarizes what Plato says about education and civic life under different legal codes but there is no clear exposition of what Plato means by ‘divine law’ nor about the connection between rationality and divinity.\(^\text{18}\)

Lutz proceeds by narrating selected content of the *Laws*; he devotes much of the book to the three opening books and to the closing discussion (960c ff.) but overlooks Books V and VI. The first chapter narrates the *Minos* and shows how it construes the notion of divine law. Lutz claims that Socrates’ interest in the *Minos* is whether ‘we come to respect the law through rational knowledge or through some other faculty’. In order to find out, one needs to ‘examine those who have been educated by the laws and who believe in their authority’ (pp. 31–2). This examination, according to Lutz, takes place in the *Laws*. According to Lutz the serious citizens living under divine law are capable of giving reasons why it is good. It is made clear in the second chapter that these citizens are Kleinias and Megillus who are originally questioned by the Athenian Stranger about the nature of the laws they obey. The goal of the divine law is ‘the greatest virtue’ and ‘justice as a whole’ (630c3–4).\(^\text{19}\) The possible inconsistency of this ‘whole’ will later be the main problem for the legal code the Athenian Stranger lays down (cf. 960d and 963a discussed by Lutz in Chapter Seven). Already here Lutz shows that even on his account rationality and divinity are strongly connected: truly divine law can be recognized or determined by reason (pp. 42–4).

\(^\text{18}\) Since Lutz does not make it very clear what is a divine law he most probably considers as divine each and every law that is said to be given by a deity. This allows him to refer to the text as if mentioning divine law, whereas the Laws mention simply the legal codes of Sparta or Crete. Yet, Lutz never asks the question whether Plato wants to show that these legal codes are truly divine.

\(^\text{19}\) Lutz translates ‘virtue as a whole’ where the text has *dikaiosunēn telean* at 630c6 and thus creates the impression that the wording is the same as earlier at 630b3 where it is *aneu sumpasēs aretēs*. 
Chapter Three discusses the first three books of the *Laws*, namely the concepts the Athenian Stranger introduces during the discussion of the Spartan legal code. Lutz focuses on education and persuasively narrates how Plato highlights the importance of education as the ‘awakening of an erotic love of citizenship’ (p. 62, cf. 643e4–6). The lesson is that the ‘laws of Sparta and Crete . . . fail to provide a suitable moral education’ (p. 76). Since the ancient legal codes of Sparta, Crete and Athens were shown to be insufficient, Lutz concludes that the Athenian Stranger has a task ‘to elaborate the best code of law’ and will try to ‘show that human reason can establish a code of divine law’ (p. 89).

Chapter Four narrates Book IV of the *Laws* and it explains what role education, games and music play in the life of the citizens under the divine law. Lutz concludes that the question concerning the harmony or even unity of virtues is far from being settled (p. 115). Lutz shows how gods elicit courage in citizens which expect gods to pay them back with fame and honour (p. 105). Then Chapter Four leaps from Book IV to Book VII of the *Laws* and Lutz never returns to the books he jumped over. Despite his scepticism concerning the relation between reason and divinity, Lutz holds that the intellect is the source of divine law (pp. 89, 92). This topic continues in Chapter Five which describes further effects that divine law has on the life of the citizens, including loosening family bonds and education in virtue.20

Chapter Six goes further into developing the controversy concerning the fact that ‘the laws fail to aim at a single, coherent goal’ (p. 134). It cannot be denied that this failure is discussed at the end of the *Laws* (963a), however Lutz seems too rash in neglecting passages which seem to suggest that this

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20 Here Lutz compares the account concerning self-control from Books II and III (653b–c, 688e–689b) to the ‘image’ of us as puppets from Book I (644d–645c). Yet I am not sure if Lutz is right to claim that these two accounts differ so dramatically (p. 125). When the Athenian Stranger starts to discuss the problematic topic of ruling oneself (or controlling oneself, similarly cf. Resp. 430e–431a) he first tries to elucidate it by an image (*eikon*, 644c1) of two counsellors contradicting each other (pleasure and pain) which are judged by deliberation (*logismos*). When this deliberation becomes a common dogma of a city it is called ‘law’ (644d2–3). Kleinias and Megillus do not consider this image as illuminating and demand further explanation. The Athenian Stranger then introduces a myth (*muthos*, 645b1) about humans as puppets of the gods. Opposed to what Lutz thinks the text clearly suggests that the image and myth should explain one and the same thing, including the role of deliberation mentioned in the myth (645b4). According to Lutz, Plato adopts a puppet-like concept of self-control which lacks proper deliberation and supports obedience to the law because it is noble and sacred (pp. 125, 130). His thesis should be quoted in full: ‘but however much the Athenian Stranger might wish that the citizens could use their own practical reason to understand the purposes of the laws, he knows that the citizens have been raised by a moral education that prevents them from exercising practical reason in regard to their own passions and conduct’ (p. 131). Since I think Lutz is mistaken in his interpretation of the conflict between ‘image’ and ‘myth’ of self-rule at 644c–645c, I believe this conclusion is mistaken as well.