

Markus M. Totzeck, *Die politischen Gesetze des Mose: Entstehung und Einflüsse der politia-judaica-Literatur in der Frühen Neuzeit*. REFO500 Academic Studies, 49 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 497 pp.

Since the 1990s scholars have been increasingly interested in the study of Christian Hebraism. One genre that has attracted their attention is the so-called *politia judaica*, comprising early modern treatises relying on the Hebrew Bible (and sometimes rabbinical sources) as an authoritative model for reflections on early-modern politics and law. According to Jewish tradition, Moses received 613 commandments, together with their oral explanation, on Mount Sinai. Even though Christians after Paul agreed that most of these commandments ended with the coming of Jesus, they disagreed as to whether some of the moral and juridical commandments (in one form or another) continued into the New Covenant and were still valuable in their own contexts and times. After the Renaissance and the Reformation, their respective differences contributed to processes of denominational distinction and demarcation. At around the same time, scholars began to explore the importance of Mosaic Law beyond the proper field of Covenant theology, asking how Mosaic Law related to Roman Law in particular and Ancient Law in general, and if and how parts of it were suitable as a model for early-modern jurisdiction and government. Their discussion was stimulated by Josephus, who had not only retold the story of how Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai but also classified the government that Moses was to establish as a 'theocracy'.

Among the most prominent *politia judaica* between the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries were Bonaventure Corneille Bertram's *De politia judaica*, Carlo Sigonio's *De republica Hebraeorum*, and Petrus Cunaeus's *De republica Hebraeorum*, with Cunaeus being influenced by Hugo Grotius and his earlier manuscript, *De republica emendanda*. Whereas the aforementioned authors differed in their knowledge of Hebrew, they concurred in their recourse to Old Testament sources and agreed on the importance of Mosaic Law for the discussion of contemporary problems. Recently, their treatises have been studied to emphasize the impact of religion on early-modern political thought and contest the conflation of 'secularization' and 'modernity'.¹

In his *Die politischen Gesetze des Mose*, Markus M. Totzeck follows the path of earlier scholarship, while broadening our perspective and refiguring the

1 Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

notion of *politia judaica* in early-modern Europe. On the one hand, he objects to the uncritical classification of *politia judaica* as part of the larger field of Christian Hebraism (33–34 and 410). On the other hand, he reminds us of the gap between the importance of denominational struggles in early-modern *politia judaica* and their neglect in the study of the respective sources (34–35). To bridge this gap, Totzeck focuses on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century authors and draws our attention to entanglements between *politia judaica*, theological discussions about the abrogation or continuity of (parts of) Mosaic Law, and early Reformation discourses of denominational differentiation and demarcation.

Totzeck's book is a rich treasure trove of sources and discussions. In chapter 1 ('Moses Gemeinwesen: Die antike Vorstellung von Mose als Gesetzgeber und ihre Renaissance in der Frühen Neuzeit', pp. 41–106), the author explores the importance of biblical and non-biblical discussions (Josephus, Philo, Eusebius) about Mosaic Law and politics in the Italian Renaissance with authors such as Niccolò Machiavelli, Girolamo Savonarola, Marsilio Ficino, and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Chapter 2 ('Debatten über die Geltung und politische Relevanz der mosaischen Gesetze in der Reformationszeit', pp. 107–220) focuses on the Reformation and denominational differentiation. In this chapter, Totzeck not only elaborates on main figures of the Reformation such as Martin Luther, Philipp Melancthon, Huldreich Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, Jean Calvin and Theodor Beza, but also includes well-known and less-known protagonists of the 'Radical Reformation', among them Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, the 'Zwickau Prophets', and Miguel Servet and more importantly, Servet's defender, Sebastian Castellio. Chapter 3 ('Konzeptionen eines mosaischen Ursprungs des Rechts in der humanistischen Jurisprudenz und Historiographie der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts', pp. 221–338) turns our attention to sixteenth-century humanist lawyers and historians from Jean Bodin to Carlo Sigonio, who integrated the study of Mosaic Law into first approaches to a history of global law and comparative jurisprudence. In chapter 4 ('Die politischen Gesetze Moses als Modell in der calvinistisch-reformierten Theologie', pp. 339–84), Totzeck pays tribute to the special importance of Mosaic Law in the different varieties of Reformed thought, only to offer in chapter 5 ('Transformationen: das mosaische Gemeinwesen als politisches Programm für das 17. Jahrhundert', pp. 385–406) a short survey of the seventeenth-century Dutch context and its main authors, Grotius and Cunaeus. The last chapter ('Ergebnisse und Ausblick: Moses Gesetz und Gemeinwesen als politisches Konzept am Beginn der Moderne', pp. 407–37) is dedicated to *politia judaica* in and beyond the seventeenth century, providing an 'outlook' on changes and future developments of the genre, and summarizing the contributions of authors