

ADELA YARBRO COLLINS

The Apocalypse and Apocalyptic Topics

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

Mohr Siebeck

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Adela Yarbro Collins

The Apocalypse
and Apocalyptic Topics

Collected Essays

Volume 2

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Introduction

My interest in apocalypticism is closely related to a fascination with myth. While I was a graduate student in the Study of Religion at Harvard University (focusing on New Testament and Christian Origins), I took a course from Frank Moore Cross in the History of the Religion of Israel. A major theme in that course was the interplay of myth and history in the literature of ancient Israel. At times attention to history was dominant; at other times myth played a striking role as a means of interpreting events and situations. In his lecture on the book of Job, Professor Cross argued that it is an example of “the recrudescence of myth.” Given the powerful and beautiful language of Job, I took “recrudescence” here to mean the re-emergence of a constructive and impressive form of linguistic expression. Many years passed before I realized that the term is often used to refer to the return of something bad, like a disease. In his course, however, Professor Cross never spoke of myth in a pejorative way.

Two closely related mythic images are prominent in the speech of God from the whirlwind in the book of Job. God’s power to establish and maintain order in the universe is expressed in terms of his conquest and control of the mythic beast of the sea, Leviathan, and the mythic beast of the land, Behemoth. These two images also occur in the book of Revelation as challenges to God’s power over earth and sea. In chapter 13 of Revelation, a beast from the sea symbolizes the rebellious power of the Roman Empire, and a beast from the land expresses the subversive power of the aristocracy of Asia Minor, which collaborates with the Empire and supports it. This similarity between Job and Revelation suggested to me that a good dissertation topic would be the exploration of the role of myth in the book of Revelation.

At the time I was formulating my dissertation proposal, I was aware that some New Testament scholars interpreted Revelation only in terms of the Hebrew Bible and post-biblical Jewish literature, while others turned exclusively to Greek and Roman literature to explain it. I asked myself which scholars were right and quickly concluded that both approaches were important. The book of Revelation needed to be interpreted cross-culturally.

In my dissertation I focused on the myths of combat between deities and monsters, which describe how the universe was created and order is maintained. Such myths are widespread in the ancient Near East, ancient and Hellenistic Egypt, and in Greek and Roman literature. After analyzing and comparing these myths, I studied how some of their specific images are used in the book of Revelation.

I also tried to show how the narrative pattern typical of these myths is used to structure Revelation as a whole.¹

Richard Clifford, S.J. organized a Continuing Seminar on Apocalypticism, which met at consecutive General Meetings of the Catholic Biblical Association from 1973 through 1976. Other members of the Seminar included George W. E. Nickelsburg, John J. Collins, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Pheme Perkins, and Anthony Saldarini. I presented two papers, one on “The Political Perspective of the Apocalypse” in 1974 and one on “The History of Religions Approach to Apocalypticism” in 1975.² In the former article I rejected the concept of “passive resistance” in favor of “active, non-violent resistance.” In the latter essay, I dealt with the relative weight of Greco-Roman sources and Jewish sources with regard to the elements of the cosmos.

In the 1970s, the Society of Biblical Literature commissioned a number of working groups to reassess and expand the work of Rudolf Bultmann on the forms of early Christian literature.³ I participated in the working group on the genre “apocalypse” and the smaller forms typically employed in such texts. The results of the group’s work were published in 1979. My contribution was an analysis of the examples of the genre “apocalypse” in early Christian literature, along with the smaller forms that appear in such texts.⁴ In this article I noted that the historical type of apocalypse, often including a review of history, is rare in early Christian literature. Far more common is the journey-type, which focuses on the rewards of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked in the afterlife.

Dieter Georgi was one of my professors while I was a graduate student at Harvard University. He taught an extension course on Revelation at the Harvard Divinity School, offered in the evening with open enrollment. I was the Teaching Fellow for that course. His interpretation of Revelation 18 was striking. This chapter contains several vivid angelic announcements of the fall of “Babylon” (Rome). It also presents vivid descriptions of kings, merchants, captains of ships,

¹ Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, HDR 9 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the Harvard Theological Review, 1976; reprinted Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001).

² Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Political Perspective of the Revelation to John,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 241–56; reprinted in Adela Yarbro Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism*, JSJSup 50 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 198–217; Adela Yarbro Collins, “The History-of-Religions Approach to Apocalypticism and the ‘Angel of the Waters’ (Apoc 16:4–7),” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 367–81. In the title of the latter article I used the plural “religions.” In the history-of-religion method in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the underlying conception was that the history of religion was a unity and that its culmination was Christianity. Many involved in the revival of the method in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries do not share this view, and the use of the plural “religions” reflects that difference.

³ Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963; rev. ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

⁴ Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Early Christian Apocalypses,” in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins, *Semeia* 14 (1979): 61–121.

travelers at sea, sailors, and seafaring merchants weeping and mourning over the destroyed city. Georgi inferred from these passages that the author of Revelation also mourned the demise of Rome and its extensive network of trade. I was intrigued by the suggestion but somewhat skeptical.

Years later I was invited to offer a paper at a Biblical Colloquium at the University of Leuven/Louvain in Belgium. Such a colloquium is offered every year, one year on a Hebrew Bible topic, the next on a New Testament topic. I was invited to the thirtieth colloquium in August 1979, which was on the book of Revelation. In my paper I examined critically the suggestion made by Professor Georgi. My conclusion was that the mourning had two roles to play in the chapter. It was a way of describing the fall of Rome, allowing it to take place, as it were, “off stage.” It was also a way of depicting the fall of the “enemies” of the intended readers of the work. The fall of Rome is a victory for the righteous, who had suffered persecution or the threat of it. There are clear signs in the chapter that the readers are called to rejoice, not to mourn at the expected destruction.⁵

In the same month and year as the Biblical Colloquium on Revelation, the University of Uppsala in Sweden hosted an international colloquium on apocalypticism, organized by David Hellholm and others. The scope of the conversation was the Mediterranean region and the ancient Near East. The favored approach was the history-of-religion method and was thus historical and cross-cultural. My essay was an investigation of the function of a particular apocalypse, the book of Revelation, in its historical setting. A widespread view at the time was that apocalypses had the function of consoling the intended readers in a context of persecution. This view does not apply easily to Revelation because there is little evidence of persecution of Christ-believers at the time the book was probably written. I argued that the crisis was more social and a matter of perception than political and external. In this essay I also addressed the moral and theological questions raised by the work’s call for vengeance, the violence of the imagery, and its role in resolving envy.⁶

Frank Moore Cross received a Festschrift in honor of his sixtieth birthday. I was invited to contribute and took the occasion to revisit the theme of myth and history. I concluded that the tradition-historical method helps the interpreter discern the use of mythic traditions and appreciate how they give depth

⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Revelation 18: Taunt-song or Dirge?” *L’Apocalypse johannique et l’apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament*, Congress Volume of the Biblical Colloquium at Louvain (August 1979), ed. Jan Lambrecht, BETL 53 (Gembloux: Duculot and Leuven University Press, 1980), 185–204.

⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Persecution and Vengeance in the Book of Revelation,” in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism at Uppsala (August, 1979), ed. David Hellholm (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983; 2nd ed. 1989), 729–49. This essay is included in the present volume.

to the images of the work. The contemporary-historical method makes possible a reasonable hypothesis about its date.

I concluded that there is no compelling reason to reject the testimony of Irenaeus that Revelation was composed near the end of the reign of Domitian. The lack of top-down, systematic, empire-wide persecution at that time suggests an active role of the author. He wrote not simply to console his audience in a time of grave crisis but to point out a crisis that many of his readers did not perceive.⁷

In October of 1981 I gave the William C. Winslow Lectures at Seabury Western Theological Seminary, located in Evanston, Illinois.⁸ I gave two lectures on “Visions and Politics in the Book of Revelation.” I revised these lectures as chapters for a book and wrote three more chapters. The result is my book *Crisis and Catharsis*, in which I used a variety of methods to interpret Revelation.⁹ I argued that the purpose of Revelation was to resolve the tension aroused by a perceived social crisis. The political stance and conflictual tone of Revelation aimed at raising the consciousness of certain marginal Christians. The book’s presentation of the future involved a political and social transformation that was a protest against the perceived injustice of their current situation.

At some point, I think it was in 1983, I was walking in a public place and happened to meet Jacob Neusner. We greeted one another, and then he asked me if I would attend a conference he was organizing and give a paper. I agreed. The conference took place at Brown University in 1984 and was entitled “To See Ourselves as Others See Us”: The Theory of the Other in the Formative Age of Christianity and Judaism. It was sponsored by the Program in Judaic Studies Brown University. The allusion in the title is to a line in the last stanza of a poem by Robert Burns.¹⁰

My paper was entitled “Insiders and Outsiders in the Book of Revelation and Its Social Context.” I first discussed the implied concepts of insiders and outsiders from the point of view of Romans and Greco-Asiatics living in Anatolia, and then from the perspective of Jews and Christians in the same region. I then discerned groups treated as outsiders in the book of Revelation by studying its

⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Myth and History in the Book of Revelation: The Problem of Its Date,” in *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith*, Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross, Jr., ed. Baruch Halpern and Jon D. Levenson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981), 377–403.

⁸ In 2013 Seabury Western federated with Bexley Hall to form the Bexley Hall Seabury Western Theological Seminary Federation. In July 2016, the Bexley Seabury Federation moved to the campus of the Chicago Theological Seminary, where it offers the Master of Divinity and other degrees and a diploma in Anglican Studies.

⁹ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

¹⁰ Robert Burns, *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock: John Wilson, 1786), 194; cited by Jonathan Z. Smith, “What a Difference a Difference Makes,” in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, “Others” In Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs, Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 3–4.

attitudes toward Jews, polytheists, and to Rome. I concluded that some of the conflicts reflected in these attitudes involved a struggle for survival, scarce status, and for power.¹¹

I organized and convened a Seminar on Early Christian Apocalypticism at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature from 1983 through 1987.¹² The SBL working group on apocalypticism in the 1970s defined the genre “apocalypse” in terms of form and content but did not include the aspect of function. One of the results of the Seminar on Early Christian Apocalypticism was the addition of function to the definition of the genre “apocalypse” published in *Semeia* 14. Based on the work of the seminar of the 1980s, I proposed the following addition to the definition of the genre: “[a mediated revelation] intended to interpret present, earthly circumstances in light of the supernatural world and of the future, and to influence both the understanding and the behavior of the audience by means of divine authority.”¹³

In the 1980s, a Festschrift was planned to honor Krister Stendahl, to which I was invited to contribute. Stendahl did much to sensitize Christian teachers, writers, and preachers to the danger of repeating negative biblical stereotypes of Jews without comment or discussion of the differences in context between the text and the present usage. Such repetition perpetuates the negative stereotypes.

In my essay I analyzed the vilification of Jews in Revelation, especially in 2:9 and 3:9, and considered its rhetoric in light of ancient rhetoric. I also examined the reasons for the use of such rhetoric, probably conflict between the two groups and the disparity in social and political power between them. I also discuss the vituperative attacks on other groups in Revelation and the analogies of all such language in Revelation to ancient texts, especially the Dead Sea Scrolls, and to language of the twentieth century.¹⁴

I returned to the topic of early Christian apocalyptic literature when I received a request to write an essay on that subject for a multi-volume work being published in Germany.¹⁵ According to the publisher’s (de Gruyter’s) web site, *Aufstieg*

¹¹ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Insiders and Outsiders in the Book of Revelation and Its Social Context,” in “*To See Ourselves as Others See Us*,” ed. Neusner and Frerichs, 187–218. This essay is included in the present volume.

¹² The members of the steering committee of the Seminar were David E. Aune, Carolyn Osiek, Leonard Thompson, and Adela Yarbro Collins (Chair).

¹³ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Introduction,” *Early Christian Apocalypticism*, *Semeia* 36 (1986): 7. The other contributors to the volume are David E. Aune, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, David Hellholm, Martha Himmelfarb, Carolyn Osiek, and Leonard Thompson.

¹⁴ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation,” in *Christians among Jews and Gentiles*, ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg with George MacRae, Festschrift for Krister Stendahl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 308–20. The Festschrift was also published as nos. 1–3 of *HTR* 79 (1986); my essay appears on 308–20 in both publications. The essay is also included in the present volume.

¹⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Early Christian Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt/Rise and Decline of the Roman World*, Part II, vol. 25.6, ed. Wolfgang Haase

und *Niedergang der römischen Welt* (ANRW) is “a survey of Roman studies in the broadest sense, and includes the history of the reception and influence of Roman culture up to the present time.” Part II deals with the period of the Principate.

In my contribution I discussed the genre “apocalypse” and classified the early Christian apocalypses according to a simple typology. Type 1 consists of otherworldly visions and auditions. Type 1a is defined as “historical” visions and auditions and includes only one Christian work: “Jacob’s Ladder,” since it is the only one that includes a review of history as *ex eventu* prophecy. Type 1b is defined as visions and auditions in the context of cosmic and personal eschatology; five early Christian apocalypses belong to this type. The book of Revelation is discussed as an example of the type. Type 1c is characterized by visions, auditions, and personal eschatology. Five early Christian apocalypses belong to this type. I discussed the Questions of Bartholomew as an example of this type.

Type 2 is the otherworldly journey. Four early Christian apocalypses belong to this type. They contain cosmic and personal eschatology in the context of the journey. One of these, the Ascension of Isaiah 6–11, is discussed as an example. Type 2 also includes early Christian apocalypses that express personal eschatology only in the context of the otherworldly journey. There are nine examples of this type. The Story of Zosimus is discussed as an example.

I also discuss two types of early Christian literature related to the apocalypses: Oracles, including Mark 13, and testaments, including the Testament of Adam and the Penitence of Adam. Three individual related works are analyzed: Didache 16, Ascension of Isaiah 3:13–4:18, and the Apocalypse of John the Theologian attributed to John Chrysostom. The article closes with a conclusion and a bibliography.

In the late 1980s, I turned from the book of Revelation to address another topic involving early Christian apocalypticism, the Synoptic Sayings Source or Q. When I was invited to contribute to a Festschrift for Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., I took the opportunity to address this topic. I wanted to address it because a number of scholars at the time were de-emphasizing the eschatological and apocalyptic aspects of the Synoptic Sayings Source. Some, following James M. Robinson, argued that the genre of the Source was a type of wisdom book, “sayings of the wise.” Others, following Heinz Schürmann, argued that the apocalyptic Son of Man sayings belonged to an early stage of tradition that was no longer of interest to the editor of Q.

In my essay I showed first of all that wisdom sayings constituted only one of four types of sayings in the Synoptic Sayings Source. Indeed nearly half of the sayings in the Source do not fit the rubric of wisdom sayings in the narrow, proverbial sense. The largest portion of these may be described as prophetic and

and Hildegard Temporini (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 4665–711. This essay is included in the present volume.

apocalyptic sayings. Secondly, I argued that apocalyptic Son of Man sayings are found at the earliest and the latest stages of the tradition included in the Source. Thirdly, I argued that nothing in the relationship between the Synoptic Sayings Source and the Gospel of Thomas precludes the hypothesis that the coming Son of Man sayings are among the earliest of the post-Easter formulations.¹⁶

When a Festschrift was being planned for Helmut Koester's sixty-fifth birthday, I was invited to contribute an essay. In order to follow up my work on the Son of Man sayings in the Synoptic Sayings Source, I decided to write my essay on the apocalyptic Son of Man sayings in the Synoptic Gospels. In this essay I assessed critically Norman Perrin's hypothesis that none of the apocalyptic Son of Man sayings goes back to the historical Jesus. Instead I argued that Jesus used the phrase "kingdom of God" to speak about the dawning of the eschatological rule of God in the present and at times spoke about "the" son of man of Daniel 7 to express the future dimension of God's rule as delegated to that figure.¹⁷

In 1987 I was invited to give three lectures at Ministers' Week at Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, which is affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).¹⁸ One of the three lectures was entitled "Feminine Symbolism in the Book of Revelation." I published the lecture as an article in the first issue of *Biblical Interpretation*.¹⁹ I also gave a form of the lecture at Amherst College in 1992, at Abilene Christian University in 2015, and at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow in 2019.

I was invited to give a paper at a symposium in Athens and on the island of Patmos to celebrate the 1900th anniversary of the composition of the Revelation of John. The speakers included Greeks, Germans, Americans, a Romanian, a Czech, two French-speakers, an Italian, an Englishman, and a Swede. The symposium took place from September 17–26, 1995.

Before receiving this invitation, I read the *Tabula of Cebes* and was struck by the similarities between this work and Revelation. In this work, some young men are looking at a picture and wondering what its subject is and what it means. An old man joins them; he describes what is depicted in the picture and explains

¹⁶ Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Son of Man Sayings in the Sayings Source," in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer*, ed. Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 369–89. This essay is included in the present volume.

¹⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Apocalyptic Son of Man Sayings," in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, ed. Birger A. Pearson with A. Thomas Kraabel, George W. E. Nickelsburg, and Norman R. Petersen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 220–28. This essay is included in the present volume.

¹⁸ Phillips University was founded in 1906 or 1907 and closed in 1998. Upon closure it transferred most of its assets to Phillips Theological Seminary, affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), now located in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

¹⁹ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Feminine Symbolism in the Book of Revelation," *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993): 20–33. This essay is included in the present volume.

what it means.²⁰ The practice of describing and interpreting a visual phenomenon is called “*ekphrasis*” or vivid description in ancient rhetoric. The similarity I had observed led me to write my paper on the way in which the use of this device contributed to the expressive and evocative character of the language of the book of Revelation. I discussed several passages in Revelation from this point of view. One of my conclusions is that Revelation and the *Picture of Cebe*s “both manifest the shift from natural-sign picture to picture-as-code.”²¹

In 1994 Helmut Koester hosted a conference involving scholars in classics, fine arts, history of religion, New Testament, ancient Christianity, and archaeology on the topic of ancient Ephesus. The conference volume was published in 1995.²² Analogously, a Symposium on Ancient Pergamon, sponsored by the Divinity School and the Departments of Fine Arts and Classics at Harvard University took place from March 21–25, 1997. I was invited to give a paper at the symposium on the topic of “Pergamon in Early Christian Literature.” In that paper I discussed the message to Pergamon in Rev 2:12–16, *The Martyrdom of Carpus, Papyrus, and Agathonice*, which is set in Pergamon, and the mention of Pergamon in the *Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne*, which describes one of the martyrs as coming from Pergamon.

A separate section of the essay is devoted to the reference to the “throne of Satan” in the message to Pergamon in Revelation. In the process of identifying the visual referent of the phrase, I investigated traditions and archaeological remains of what were called thrones of deities. Another section discusses the combat myths from antiquity. I argued in my dissertation that these myths play a major role in the form and content of the book of Revelation. The outer frieze of the fragmentary Zeus altar from Pergamon, now in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, depicts a combat between the Olympian deities and Giants. I compare this portrayal of a combat myth and its function with those of Revelation.²³

I was invited to give a paper at a Jubilee celebration of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Biblical Theology and the Qumran Scrolls. This celebration was also the Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins, which took place in November 1997 at Princeton Theological Seminary. My paper was entitled “The Dream of a New Jerusalem.” I began with a brief discus-

²⁰ John T. Fitzgerald and L. Michael White, eds., *The Tabula of Cebe*s, SBLTT 24, Graeco-Roman Series 7 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983).

²¹ Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Apocalyptic Ekphrasis,” in *1900th Anniversary of St. John’s Apocalypse: Proceedings of the International and Interdisciplinary Symposium (Athens – Patmos)*, ed. The Holy Monastery of Saint John the Theologian in Patmos (Athens: The Holy Monastery of Saint John the Theologian in Patmos, 1999), 461. This essay is included in the present volume.

²² Helmut Koester, ed., *Ephesus Metropolis of Asia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to its Archaeology, Religion, and Culture*, HTS 41 (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995).

²³ Adela Yarbro Collins, “Pergamon in Early Christian Literature,” in *Pergamon: Citadel of the Gods*, ed. Helmut Koester, HTS 46 (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 163–84. This essay is included in the present volume.

sion of Jerusalem in the Hebrew Bible and in history. The main part of the paper discussed the three distinct but related notions of a “new Jerusalem” expressed in the Dead Sea Scrolls as a corpus. I then analyzed the treatment of a new Jerusalem in the Animal Apocalypse (1 Enoch 85–90), in the Sibylline Oracles, and the book of Revelation.

The third vision of the new Jerusalem in the Dead Sea Scrolls is the most eschatological of the three as a glorious and everlasting city and temple brought into being directly by God. It is this notion of the new Jerusalem that is most similar to the new Jerusalem in the book of Revelation.²⁴

A Colloquium on Oriental and Celtic Thought was held at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin from June 28–30, 2000. At the time, two scholars had recently published journal-articles, arguing that the thousand-year reign of Christ in Rev 20:4–6 is described as taking place in heaven. In my opinion the text of Revelation does not support this view, so I argued in my contribution to the colloquium that the scene is set on earth.²⁵

Robert Morgan is well known, among other reasons, for his stimulating book on *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter*, which he edited, translated, and introduced.²⁶ So it is not surprising that his Festschrift was entitled *The Nature of New Testament Theology*.²⁷ I was invited to contribute and wrote on the difficult topic of apocalypticism and New Testament Theology. I began my approach to the topic with some observations on the question whether the historical-critical interpretation and theological interpretation of biblical texts should employ different methods and be kept separate. At the end of the essay, I argued that theological doctrines should never be used as warrants in historical-critical studies of the Bible. With regard to explicitly theological interpretation, however, the approach to the text does not necessarily need to take historical-critical results directly into account. It is advisable that theological interpretations nevertheless be congruent with historical-critical results. After the broaching the question of historical versus theological approaches, I continued with a brief and selective history of the role of apocalypticism in New Testament theology. I then discussed a variety of ways that New Testament theology and the role of apocalypticism therein could

²⁴ Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Dream of a New Jerusalem,” in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 3 vols. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 3.231–54. This essay is included in the present volume.

²⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, “The Apocalypse of John and Its Millennial Themes,” in *Apocalyptic and Eschatological Heritage: The Middle East and Celtic Realms*, ed. Martin McNamara (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 50–60. This essay is included in the present volume.

²⁶ Robert Morgan, *The Nature of New Testament Theology: The Contribution of William Wrede and Adolf Schlatter*, SBT, 2nd ser. 25 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1973).

²⁷ Christopher Rowland and Christopher Tuckett, eds., *The Nature of New Testament Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert Morgan* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

be approached in the pluralistic situation in which we find ourselves. These approaches range from non-theistic, philosophical approaches at one end of the spectrum, fundamentalist interpretations at the other end, and a variety of perspectives and methods in between.²⁸

The 500th anniversary of the University of Leipzig was celebrated in 2009. Part of the official program of the celebration was the third international symposium of the *Corpus Judaicum-Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*, which took place from May 21–24 of that year. The main theme of the symposium was *The New Testament and Documentary Sources on Ancient Jewish Every Day Life in a Hellenistic Roman Society*. Literary studies of ancient literature and analysis of materials such as coins and papyri were both encouraged.

My paper was on portraits of rulers in the book of Revelation. I began with a discussion of Nero as indirectly portrayed in Revelation and in the sources that predicted his return for good or for evil (the Nero legend). I argued that the idea that Nero would return *from the dead* is new with the book of Revelation. The second part of the paper discusses the goddess Roma and the whore of Babylon depicted in Revelation, which is a parody of the goddess. I discuss the ways in which the portrait of the whore (representing Rome) draws upon Greek and Roman moral traditions and traditions related to the tyrant-type.²⁹

The Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome began celebrating its centennial in 2009. Four volumes of essays by various authors were published as part of the celebration. I was asked to contribute to the fourth of these volumes. Since the theme of the volume was Greco-Roman culture and the New Testament, I decided to contribute an essay on journeys to the upper and outer regions of the world from a cross-cultural perspective, drawing mostly upon Greek, Roman, Jewish, and early Christian examples. I also attempted to organize the journey-texts according to a suggested typology.

I began my essay with a history of scholarship on the topic. Then I analyzed ecstatic journeys of shamans (Type 1); ascents of the king (Type 2); ascent presented as a problem (Type 3); ascents of cultural heroes (Type 4) for the purpose of legitimation of the hero, mediation, and intercession (Type 4a), or to obtain revelation (Type 4b), ascent as a foretaste of permanent ascent (Type 4c), accounts of final or permanent ascent to a heavenly, god-like existence (Type 4d), texts showing the ambiguity and danger of ascents (Type 4e), self-presentation as such a divinely inspired cultural hero or wise man (Type 4f); ascents of magi-

²⁸ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Apocalypticism and New Testament Theology," in *The Nature of New Testament Theology*, ed. Rowland and Tuckett, 31–50. This essay is included in the present volume.

²⁹ Adela Yarbro Collins, "Portraits of Rulers in the Book of Revelation," in *Neues Testament und hellenistisch-jüdische Alltagskultur, Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen: III. Internationales Symposium zum Corpus-Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*, WUNT 274 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 275–99. This essay is included in the present volume.

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