JURNAL AMANAT AGUNG
Volume 22, Nomor 1, Juni 2026
Hlm 41-58, pISSN: 2086-7611;
eISSN: 2579-8839
https://ojs.sttaa.ac.id/index.php/JAA
DOI: https://doi.org/10.47754/jaa.v22i1.712

Reassessing the Use of Imagery of the Beasts, the Sea, and the Seven Heads in Revelation 13

Submitted:
15 Oktober 2025

Revised:
16 Maret 2026

Accepted:
11 Juni 2026

Steven[1*],
[1] Center for Foundational Education, Universitas Pelita Harapan
*Steven (steven.fla@uph.edu)

Abstract

A line of scholarship on Revelation assumes that its imagery blends elements from the Hebrew Bible, ancient myths, and the Greco-Roman world. This study challenges that reasoning by showing that the writer of Revelation not only draws primarily on the Hebrew Bible but also intentionally de-mythologizes its chaos motifs. In Revelation 13, the "sea" is not an autonomous force in cosmic conflict with God but a narrative backdrop for the rise of imperial evil, subverting the standard "sea = chaos" reading. Likewise, the seven heads invert the Hebrew Bible's symbolic completeness into a counterfeit sovereignty, parodying Rome's claims to total rule. By foregrounding immediate literary context and socio-political setting over speculative mythic parallels, this article contends that Revelation's imagery reshapes inherited biblical motifs into a symbolic grammar that equips communities under empire to discern, resist, and hope.

Keywords: Revelation 13; imagery; chaos imagery; Ancient Near East; apocalyptic.

Abstrak

Salah satu arus penelitian Kitab Wahyu mengasumsikan perpaduan unsur-unsur Alkitab Ibrani, mitologi kuno, dan dunia Yunani-Romawi dalam penggunaan simbol-simbolnya. Studi ini menantang asumsi tersebut dengan menunjukkan bahwa penulis Kitab Wahyu tidak hanya bertumpu pada Alkitab Ibrani, tetapi juga secara sengaja melakukan demitologisasi terhadap motif-motif kekacauan (chaos motifs) dalam dunia Timur Tengah Kuno. Dalam Wahyu 13, "laut" bukanlah suatu kekuatan otonom yang terlibat dalam konflik kosmis melawan Allah, melainkan latar naratif bagi munculnya kejahatan imperial. Hal ini menantang pembacaan yang mengidentikkan "laut" dengan "kekacauan". Demikian pula, simbol tujuh kepala dalam Alkitab Ibrani menjadi representasi kekuasaan yang palsu, yang menggambarkan parodi atas klaim Roma terhadap kekuasaan. Dengan menempatkan konteks sastra langsung dan latar sosial-politik sebagai fokus utama, alih-alih mengandalkan paralel-paralel mitologis yang spekulatif, artikel ini berargumen bahwa simbol-simbol dalam Kitab Wahyu merekonstruksi motif-motif biblis yang diwarisi menjadi suatu tata bahasa simbolik yang memperlengkapi komunitas-komunitas yang hidup di bawah kekuasaan imperium untuk mengenali, menolak, dan tetap berharap kepada Allah.

Kata kunci: *Wahyu 13; simbolisme apokaliptik; motif kekacauan; Timur Dekat Kuno; sastra apokaliptik.*

INTRODUCTION

The "symphony of images" in Revelation, as Schüssler Fiorenza describes it,[1] is often studied in relation to the significance of ancient chaos-combat mythic patterns and Graeco-Roman religions.[2] In her study of Revelation 12, Collins observes and compares the combat myth parallels between the chapter and Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Egyptian, and Greek myths.[3] Continuing in the same line, Gudeman argues that Revelation reconfigures the imagery of chaos into a theological assertion of divine sovereignty over evil and cosmic disorder.[4] Gudeman also notes the influence of the Babylonian Enuma Elish, in which Marduk defeats the sea goddess Tiamat, representing chaos.[5] This mythic background,[6] he argues, provides a symbolic framework reused in the Hebrew Bible and subsequently in Revelation to portray God's victory over the forces of disorder.[7]

On the other hand, while also interested in how Revelation's imagery is used, another line of scholars limits its mythic source to the Hebrew Bible. Gager, for instance, sees Revelation as an expression of apocalyptic mythology that is a tightly structured product of literary creativity.[8] The two serve the purpose of therapy, with the ultimate goal of transcending the time between the real present and the mythical future in order to overcome the unwelcome contradictions between hope and reality during times of persecution.[9] In order to do so, Gager adds that the writer of Revelation draws upon the full range of Jewish and Christian symbols depicting the two poles of oppression and despair versus hope and victory—between the worship of the beast and loyalty to the Lamb.[10]

The present study aims to contribute to this ongoing conversation by examining in depth the use of Hebrew Bible's imagery in Revelation 13. This study will examine the imagery of the beasts, the sea, and the seven heads. The main question addressed in this study is how the use of the imagery in the new context of Revelation points to a new understanding of the image's

---

1. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 26–38.
2. A. J. Beagley, "Beasts, Dragon, Sea, Conflict Motif," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1997).
3. Adela Yarbo Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, Harvard Theological Review 9 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 59–65.
4. Edward Gudeman, *The Abyss in Revelation: A View from Below*, Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 28 (Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2021), 1–6.
5. Cf. e.g. Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung Über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895).
6. Cf. Frederick J. Mabie, "Chaos and Death," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, ed. Tremper Longman III and Paul Enns, A Compendiun of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 41–42.
7. Gudeman, *The Abyss in Revelation*, 13–14.
8. John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*, Prentice-Hall Studies in Religion Series (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 49–50.
9. Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 51.
10. Gager, *Kingdom and Community*, 52.

meaning. In contrast to the view that Revelation is a syncretic book, this study argues that its imagery is drawn primarily from the Hebrew Bible, and that it is modified to suit a new context and purpose. In contrast to Gager, this study concludes that the purpose of the use of imagery is not merely therapeutic, but to point to a real hope that is experienced in the present and will be consummated in the coming of the Lamb.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a tradition-historical and literary-contextual method to examine Revelation 13's imagery of the beasts, sea, and seven heads. The analysis begins by tracing each image's occurrences and functions within the Hebrew Bible, with particular attention to the diversity of contexts in which chaos-related terms and motifs (i.e., תנין, תהום, ראשים) appear.[11] This step deliberately resists flattening these motifs into a single creation-combat myth, instead distinguishing between their various narrative, poetic, and symbolic uses.[12] The second step situates each image within Revelation's own narrative flow, considering its immediate literary context, rhetorical function, and theological purpose. In particular, Revelation 13 is situated within the narrative section following the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15), often associated with the "third woe," and within the visionary sequence of Rev. 12–14 that depicts the cosmic conflict between the beasts and the people of God. These structural observations function primarily as background for situating the passage within the flow of the Apocalypse rather than as the main focus of the present analysis. Furthermore, this study compares parallels and structural patterns while also noting significant modifications in imagery and function. The third step reads these reconfigured images against the socio-political realities of John's audience, drawing on historical data about Roman imperial ideology to discern how the imagery operates as a coded critique.

The strength of this approach lies in its challenge to the uncritical treatment of Ancient Near Eastern or Greco-Roman mythological backgrounds as interpretive defaults. Rather than beginning with presumed extrabiblical parallels and working inward, this study begins with the Hebrew Bible's own symbolic repertoire, allowing Revelation's imagery to be interpreted primarily within that canonical and theological horizon. This prioritization of immediate literary and socio-political context over speculative mythic assimilation yields fresh readings—for

---

11. Cf. John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1985); Carola Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986); Mary K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973).

12. Cf. Douglas A. Knight, "Cosmogony and Order in the Hebrew Tradition," in *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics*, ed. R. W. Lovin and F. E. Reynolds (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 139.

example, understanding the "sea" not as a primordial chaos opponent but as a narrative setting for imperial evil, and interpreting the seven heads as a parody of divine completeness co-opted by Rome's counterfeit sovereignty. By combining close textual analysis with contextual-historical sensitivity, this method uncovers Revelation's symbolic world as an intentional work of theology, rather than as an uncritical heir to chaos mythology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chaos Imagery in the Old Testament

Before examining the imagery in Revelation and its relationship to the Hebrew Bible, it is important first to clarify the problem of imagery in the Hebrew Bible that closely relates to that used in Revelation. In the historiography of Hebrew Bible studies, terms such as "beasts" and "sea" have been classified by some scholars as elements of chaos imagery. Thus, chaos in the Hebrew Bible is often portrayed through imagery drawn from the aquatic realm, such as the deep sea and its fearsome creatures. Some scholars argue that, as in other ancient Near Eastern texts, the Hebrew Bible's use of terms like the primordial sea (e.g., with the word תהום) reflects a connection to mythological traditions that depict untamed and threatening forces of chaos. In many instances, particularly within mythopoetic texts, the biblical writers use other aquatic terms—such as waters (מים), rivers (נהר), sea (ים), and floods (מבול)—in ways that appear nearly synonymous with תהום, collectively symbolizing the disorder that stands in opposition to divine order.[13]

A parallel to the cosmogonic account in the Hebrew Bible is argued to have connections to Ancient Near Eastern mythology. According to Gunkel, the battle and subduing of the sea dragon Tiamat by Marduk in the Babylonian myth Enuma Elish serves as the backdrop for this imagery.[14] The support continued until it was challenged by proponents of the Syro-Canaanite myth.[15] In the latter view, Baal's battles with Sea and Death are understood to be reflected in the Hebrew Bible. Another hypothesis, posited by Mowinckel, places the celebration of Yahweh's victory over chaos in the context of a New Year festival.[16] However, Watson challenges all of these views by arguing that, given the many variants of chaos imagery in the Hebrew Bible, it is difficult to identify a single unifying theme on which the biblical writers draw.[17]

---

13. Mabie, under "Chaos and Death," 44.

14. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*.

15. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*; Kloos, *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel*; Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery*.

16. Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962); Paul Volz, *Das Neujahrsfest Jahwes (Laubhüttenfest)* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1912).

17. Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of "Chaos" in the Hebrew Bible*, Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 341 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 1.

Considering broader literary background, the imagery of the two beasts in Revelation 13 may reflect earlier biblical traditions concerning primordial chaos monsters.[18] In Job 40–41, Behemoth is portrayed as a powerful creature associated with the land, while Leviathan appears as a terrifying sea monster connected with the sea.[19] The juxtaposition of these creatures bears a conceptual resemblance to the beasts in Revelation 13, where one beast emerges from the sea and the other from the earth.[20] Within the symbolic world of apocalyptic literature, such monstrous figures commonly represent chaotic powers opposed to God's sovereignty.[21] John appears to appropriate this imagery to portray the political and religious agents through which the beasts exercise authority in the world.[22]

However, the question of methodology is therefore at stake. The comparison of Hebrew literature with neighboring Ancient Near Eastern literature must be analyzed carefully to avoid reading foreign myths into the biblical texts. That said, even if the basic elements of the compared materials are the same, the fact remains that the Hebrew texts contain "only casual and vague allusions."[23] Another attempt is made by Wakeman, who saw the possibility of viewing the two as manifestations of the same myth, expressed in various forms across a wide cultural area.[24] This attempt, Watson argues, does not seek to interpret the biblical texts as they stand, but rather to discover hints from extra-biblical texts and to declare these as the background of the biblical material itself.[25]

The revision proposed by Watson opens up the possibility of viewing the imagery of chaos not merely as related to the creation account, but as encompassing a broad spectrum of human experience under the astonishing power of God.[26] According to Watson, the nineteenth-century framework on the matter is constrained to discussions of creation and combat when addressing the imagery of chaos.[27] However, when referring to creation accounts such as the one in Genesis 1:2, the concept of chaos attributed to the term תהו ובהו was not a recognized category for the Hebrews.[28] The idea of chaos was read into Hebrew cosmology based on the Greek word χάος,

---

18. Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 74–78.
19. John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 523–28.
20. Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 682–684.
21. Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 572–573.
22. Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 489–491.
23. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:16.
24. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster*, 4.
25. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 28.
26. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 3.
27. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 12.
28. Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Vom Geist Der Ebräischen Poesie: Eine Einleitung Für Die Libehaber Derselben und Der Ältesten Geschichte Des Menschlichen Geistes* (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1825), 1:59–60.

which denotes a gaping void or yawning abyss.[29] This widespread superimposition of concepts has resulted in an imposed close relationship between the imagery of chaos and the creation-combat narrative, as seen in the work of Gunkel.[30] Drawing from the use of the word תהו ובהו in the Hebrew Bible (like in Deuteronomy 32:10; Job 6:18; 12:24; Psalm 107:40), Tsumura and Westermann rightly argue that it does not reflect a mythical idea like the Greek concept of chaos, but rather denotes desert, waste, devastation, nothingness, or a way of explaining the initial situation of the earth as "not yet."[31] Considering the Hebrew understanding, the concept of chaos should not be confined solely to the creation account.

Accordingly, scholars such as Tsumura and Watson, who reject a necessary connection between chaos-combat and creation, argue that the two themes function independently within the Hebrew Bible.[32] Watson notes that the two themes appear in close proximity in only a minority of texts, such as Psalm 74 and 89.[33] Even when Yahweh appears to engage with the sea as if in battle, it remains part of the created order under His sovereignty; He is never depicted as being in conflict with it.[34] In Psalm 74:13–14, the natural world is already presupposed. Thus, it is debatable to connect chaos-combat solely with creation. A similar sovereignty is also evident in the relationship between God and the sea monsters, as depicted in Babylonian sources. The sea monsters are portrayed as created beings rather than as adversaries.[35] Furthermore, in passages that clearly show God's victory, there is no creation theme—and vice versa; the two are not necessarily connected.[36] Thus, the imagery of chaos, closely related to creation, monsters, and the sea, is no longer tenable. However, in the study of imagery in Revelation, some scholars still maintain this relationship,[37] and even extend it by incorporating Greco-Roman mythology.[38]

It is important to revisit the longstanding assumptions about chaos imagery in relation to both the Hebrew Bible and the Book of Revelation. Rather than importing extrabiblical mythologies wholesale into the interpretation of these texts, it is crucial to uncover how culturally embedded symbols function within their own theological and narrative logic. By situating

---

[29] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), 1713; H. J. Rose, "Chaos," in *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 226.

[30] Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*.

[31] David Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 9–35; Claus Westermann, *Genesis: I. Teilband Genesis 1-11* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974), 143.

[32] David Toshio Tsumura, *The Chaoskampf Myth in the Biblical Tradition*, Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 140, no. 4 (2020): 963–70.

[33] Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 22.

[34] Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 4.

[35] H. W. F. Saggs, *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel* (London: Athlone Press, 1978), 235.

[36] Saggs, *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel*, 56.

[37] Beagley, under "Beasts, Dragon, Sea, Conflict Motif."

[38] Gudeman, *The Abyss in Revelation: A View from Below*.

Revelation's imagery within the symbolic world of the Hebrew Bible, this approach affirms the necessity of reading texts contextually—both in terms of literary tradition and socio-religious environment—thereby resisting reductive or anachronistic interpretations.

At the same time, this survey demonstrates that the Gunkelian paradigm—though decisively challenged in Hebrew Bible scholarship—continues to exercise disproportionate influence on New Testament studies, especially in interpretations of Revelation 13. The persistence of this framework has often led scholars to assume a chaos-combat background even when the imagery can be explained more directly by other symbolic traditions. The present study therefore takes up the task of reassessing Revelation 13 in light of this historiographical tension. It argues that John's imagery, while echoing scriptural patterns, does not depend upon the chaos motif as formulated by Gunkel. Instead, Revelation 13 reconfigures beast and sea imagery in ways that align more closely with political, theological, and christological concerns than with mythological combat traditions.

Imagery in Revelation

Revelation employs apocalyptic elements as a means of revealing a transcendent, otherworldly reality to communicate the author's message.[39] The seriousness of the crisis John experienced is conveyed to the reader as a very real one through the use of apocalyptic imagery. Thus, the imagery that finds its counterpart in the Hebrew Bible is used in a more nuanced and contextually embedded way by the author of Revelation.[40] The problem is that the imagery is often left unexplained, except for some vague and even puzzling interpretations offered by an *angelus interpres* or the narrator of the book.[41] What is more certain is that the allusions and symbols used in Revelation are assumed to be understood by readers familiar with the Hebrew Bible and other literature.[42] The narrative of Revelation is portrayed as a forward-moving spiral that guides readers through a progression from conflict to victory.[43]

The imagery used in Revelation is often interpreted as symbolizing the reality of the crisis being experienced at the time. For instance, Bauckham interprets the recovery of the beast in Revelation 13 as symbolizing the restoration and strengthening of Rome, while Revelation 17 depicts its downfall, with the beast representing Nero himself.[44] The use and interpretation of

---

39. Gudeman, *The Abyss in Revelation*, 3; Konrad Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 53.

40. G. K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

41. Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 53.

42. Gudeman, *The Abyss in Revelation*, 4.

43. Koester, *Revelation*, 115.

44. Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1993), 429, 439.

symbolism align well with the nature of apocalyptic tradition, which serves to depict present realities through figurative imagery. However, the focus of this study is to examine the specific use of imagery in Revelation 13 and to trace its use and function throughout the book. Given the three types of images in Revelation—simile, symbol, and narrative image—it is useful to bear in mind that the imagery can be understood not only as a symbol carrying more than a literal meaning but also as a narrative image, since the imagery interacts within a series of events.[45] That being said, the imagery that appears continuous with its usage in the Hebrew Bible will be analyzed in terms of its tradition-historical background and how the author of Revelation utilizes it to convey his message.[46] In fact, before the inclusion of this imagery in Revelation, many of these motifs were already in use, as evidenced in Jewish apocalyptic writings and their aftermath, such as 1 and 2 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch.[47] However, the use of extrabiblical sources in Revelation is shown to be minimal, if not entirely absent. What is more important to keep in mind is that it is the ideas, not the individual images, that can be assembled into a conceptual mosaic as a whole.[48]

The imagery in Revelation thus reflects not merely literary dependence, but a theological adaptation grounded in the cultural moment of its composition. Revelation engages with inherited symbols of the Hebrew Bible not in a static or derivative fashion, but by reshaping them to address immediate socio-political and religious crises. Situated within the broader literary movement of Revelation12–14, it portrays the cosmic conflict between the beasts and the people of God. After the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15), the narrative enters the final phase of the conflict that ultimately leads to God's eschatological victory. Within this section, Revelation 12 introduces the beasts' hostility toward the messianic community, while Revelation 13 depicts the earthly instruments through which the dragon exercises his authority. The two beasts—the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth—therefore function as the political and religious agents of the beast's power in the world. In this sense, Revelation 13 develops the conflict introduced in Revelation 12 and prepares for the announcement of judgment in Revelation14. This means that the original meanings of the imagery in the Hebrew Bible may be expanded or transformed to accommodate new meanings within the context of Revelation.

The apocalyptic symbols are more than vestiges of myth. They function within Revelation's narrative as culturally embedded codes through which divine sovereignty is asserted amidst imperial oppression and eschatological anxiety. This reveals that John's symbolic world is not a self-enclosed theological system but a dynamic field shaped by intertextual echoes, cultural memory, and communal experience. By highlighting how these symbols engage both contemporary and inherited cultural frameworks, this analysis exposes the limitations of Gunkel's chaos-combat model for Revelation 13 and opens up possibilities for a reading that is both contextually grounded and theologically fruitful for current ecclesial and social praxis.

---

[45] Ruben Zimmermann, "Imagery in John: Opening up Paths into the Tangled Thicket of John's Figurative World," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language*, ed. Jörg Frey et al., Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 200 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 15–27; Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 55.

[46] Otto Böcher, *Johannes-Apokalypse*, Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, vol. 18 (1998): 611–27.

[47] Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 59.

[48] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 66; Zimmermann, "Imagery in John: Opening up Paths into the Tangled Thicket of John's Figurative World," 34.

The Beasts

The imagery of the beast in Revelation 13:1–10 (cf. 17:1–18) can be traced to the imagery of sea monsters (תנין or תנינים) in the Hebrew Bible. The identification of the beasts with the dragon, Leviathan, and Rahab appears in Psalm 74 and 89. The context of these psalms reflects a grave national crisis, marked by defeat and territorial annexation at the hands of the Babylonians around 587 BC. Further crises are depicted, such as the destruction of the temple in Psalm 74 and the apparent renunciation of the Davidic covenant in Psalm 89.[49] It is therefore important to note that, both in the Hebrew Bible and in Revelation, the symbolic image of the beast as the enemy of the people of God emerges from a context of "national" lament. This observation already suggests a significant departure from Gunkel's mythological reading: the imagery is not primarily cosmological chaos, but political catastrophe given theological form. Furthermore, certain allusions to the beasts in the Hebrew Bible portray them as inimical and as objects of divine destruction.[50] If Revelation employs the imagery of the beasts in the same way as its Hebrew Bible counterparts, one should expect the imagery to serve a similar function of identifying and condemning concrete historical oppressors rather than perpetuating a primordial *chaoskampf*.

The specific mention of Rahab and Leviathan in Isaiah 51 and Psalm 74 and 89 warrants careful attention to the nature of the entities being referenced. At least three types of referents are commonly discussed in this context: historical, naturalistic, and mythical. From the context of the passages, Isaiah 51 and Psalm 74 unmistakably allude to the crossing of the Red Sea.[51] In accordance with the immediate context of the passages, Rahab and Leviathan most likely refer to Egypt as Israel's enemy pursuing them during the crossing of the Red Sea. The case of Psalm 89 is more complex, as there is no direct context to determine its referent apart from the parallel between תנין and "thy enemies." Watson, however, identifies verbal echoes from Exodus 15:6–14 and Psalm 77:12–16 to argue that it likewise alludes to the dividing of the Red Sea in Exodus.[52] Apart from these three passages, there are instances in which Rahab is portrayed mythically as a draconic enemy or is associated with darkness, particularly in the later sections of the book of Job

---

49. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 142.
50. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 387.
51. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 388.
52. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 388.

(see Job 26:13; cf. 3:8). Notwithstanding, in all instances, the sea monsters metaphorically represent the enemy of God and his people. This makes clear that, unlike the Gunkelian schema of chaos monsters embodying cosmic disorder, the Hebrew Bible presents Rahab and Leviathan primarily as symbols of historical enemies transposed into theological language of lament and deliverance. Revelation's use of the imagery must be read within this trajectory rather than as a revival of chaos myth.

In Revelation, the imagery seems to serve as a counter-image to Christ (cf. 5:6–14).[53] Some hints are considered below. The two images contrasted here are to show the contrasting authority of both. While the beast is characterized as demonic or originating from Satan, Christ is depicted as the Son of Man (1:9–20; 14:14–20), the Lamb (5:6–14), and the One who rides a white horse (19:11–21)—one who comes with majesty and power from God but also embodies defenselessness and suffering through violent death.[54] Revelation, then, presents the beast as the complete antithesis of Christ. Every virtue embodied in Christ is directly opposed by a corresponding vice in the beast, highlighting the total moral and spiritual contrast that utterly separates the two. This Christological polarity is crucial: it shows that Revelation's intent is not to dramatize a cosmic combat myth but to construct an ethical and theological contrast that guides communal allegiance.

The imagery of the beast from the sea features a modification of the narrative in Daniel 7:2–8. The model and elements used in Revelation 13:1–8 are unmistakably drawn from their Hebrew Bible counterparts, with certain modifications to serve the author's purpose. Verbal parallels—including the rising from the sea, the beast's appearance, its war against the saints, its blasphemous speech, and the duration of its reign—are evident in Revelation, as they are in Daniel. The key difference between the two is that, in Daniel, the beasts emerge from the sea in succession—lion, bear, leopard, and a beast with ten horns—whereas Revelation combines all these features into a beast.[55] Compared to the earlier material, Revelation combines all the traits of the beasts into a single creature, revealing the tyrannical, cruel, threatening, and even demonic character of Roman rule.[56] Here again the consolidation of inherited imagery for rhetorical effect takes place: Revelation is not reviving chaos mythology but reconfiguring Israel's symbolic repertoire into a single, totalizing figure of imperial oppression.

The evil nature of the dragon parallels its depiction in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Isaiah 27), where it is characterized by the term נחש and is destined to be slain by Yahweh's sword. In this context, the dragon does not represent a specific nation but symbolizes the power of evil. This abstract, representative function of Leviathan—and the projection of its slaying in the eschaton—differs substantially from its apparent Ugaritic antecedent.[57] This dualistic pattern is made explicit in Revelation, where Satan is identified as "the dragon." In other instances in the Hebrew Bible, the dragon metaphor functions as a synonym for Egypt (Psalm 87:4; Isaiah 30:7) and also refers more specifically to both Egypt and Pharaoh (Ezekiel 29:3–6; 32:2–8). It is also identified with Rahab (Psalm 89:11; Job 9:13; 26:12; Isaiah 51:9) and with Leviathan (Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 104:26; Job 3:8; 40:25–41:26). These images can thus be understood as figurative depictions of Egypt as all-engulfing.[58] Like the usage in Ezekiel 32:2, these images are intended to portray the beast as a dangerous and aggressive creature—foul, unclean, and deserving of an ignominious end.[59] What Revelation achieves, however, is not the perpetuation of a myth of cosmic combat but the theological transformation of these images into a symbol of satanic power manifest in empire.

---

[53] Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 57.

[54] Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 58.

[55] Steve Moyise, "The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 90.

[56] Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 60; Moyise, "The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation," 90–91.

The imagery of the monsters in Revelation 13 demonstrates how apocalyptic literature functions not merely as theological proclamation, but as a medium of cultural resistance against Rome, repurposing deeply embedded biblical motifs for new contexts of crisis. What Revelation does with Rahab, Leviathan, and the beast is not simply to revive mythic language, but to reconfigure it into a symbolic grammar that communicates both judgment on imperial oppression and hope for divine vindication. This hermeneutical strategy, as demonstrated in the way Revelation amalgamates and intensifies Daniel's beasts, reflects an acute awareness of cultural memory and the affective power of inherited images. For pastors and religious educators, this carries profound implications: the use of biblical imagery in preaching or teaching should account for the cultural work such symbols perform—how they resonate with, challenge, or affirm the lived realities of a faith community. Especially in times of political instability or cultural marginalization, Revelation's symbolic world offers a theological imagination rooted in Scripture but responsive to present concerns. It encourages readers to read Revelation not as esoteric prophecy but as a pastoral resource shaped by its socio-historical world, inviting communities to discern the contours of evil in their own time while clinging to the counter-image of the Lamb. In this way, Revelation 13 resists being subsumed under the Gunkelian framework of chaos imagery and instead exemplifies a theological strategy of reinterpreting Israel's symbolic heritage for the sake of communal endurance and faithful resistance under Roman Empire.

---

57. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 391.

58. F. Brown et al., eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 531.

59. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 165.

The Sea

Among the terms frequently discussed in the chaos imagery, the word תהום is particularly associated with the act of creation. Several verses that are clearly related to this theme include Genesis 1:2, Proverb 8:24, 27; 8:28, and Psalm 104:6. The direct association between the word תהום and the act of creation, then, raises the question of whether it represents uncreated chaos. Scholars who accept the mythological background of the creation account in the Hebrew Bible tend to agree with Gunkel that תהום is uncreated.[60] In line with this view, the primordial threat against creation is understood as a depersonalized version of Tiamat.[61] However, as has increasingly been recognized, this assumption flattens the distinctive theological orientation of the Hebrew Bible. Tsumura argues that to demonstrate תהום as a loanword from the Akkadian *ti'āmat*, one cannot rely solely on etymological cognates from the common Semitic root.[62] Moreover, the Akkadian term *ti'āmtum* (or *tâmtum*) is commonly used to mean "sea" or "ocean" in an ordinary sense, and is only occasionally personified as a divine being in mythological contexts.[63] In short, where Gunkel saw primordial chaos, the Hebrew Bible presents תהום as part of the created order, subject to divine sovereignty.

Proponents of the chaos imagery motif, such as John Day, often associate the term 'sea' with the dragon. Because there are passages in which creation is depicted as involving conflict between Yahweh and the sea, or as Yahweh's effort to subdue the sea—such as Psalm 104:6–9; Job 38:8–11; Proverb 8.29—and because the sea can be personified as the dragon (e.g., Isaiah 51:9–10), the sea is thus interpreted as a personified dragon.[64] However, it is not evident that the two should be equated.[65] Nor are the two identical in Revelation. The phrase "a beast rising out of the sea" (Revelation 13.1) should not be understood to mean "a beast rising out of the beast/dragon." The sea is presented as a natural setting—a place from which the beast arises. While this may imply that the beast is identified with the sea dragon or Leviathan, it does not suggest that the sea itself is a distinct personal entity. Additionally, the sea is not depicted as being in active combat with God—only the dragon is (Revelation 13.6–7).

The phrase "the beast from the sea" is best understood as a hybrid figure. Rather than interpreting the term "sea" independently from the "beast," the phrase must be understood as a unified expression. Taken together, it exemplifies one of the ways Revelation employs bizarre imagery to convey symbolic realities.[66] In the context of Revelation 13.1, the phrase presents a representation of the Roman Empire. It features contradictory elements by uniting the beast with the sea, in contrast to the beast from the land. This may also draw attention to the empire's social and political practices, which lead not to life but to tyranny, destruction, and death—offering the people of God something as bizarre as the beast itself.[67] While this study assumes that Revelation's readers recognized connections with the Hebrew Bible—particularly in relation to sea and monster imagery—it is also plausible that they were familiar with the wider cultural mythologies of their world. The interplay between biblical and surrounding mythic motifs may therefore have shaped how these readers perceived the text's symbolic universe. The specific usage of the term must first be determined in light of its immediate context.[68]

---

[60] See e.g., B. W. Anderson, "Mythopoetic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith," in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. B. W. Anderson, Issues in Religion and Theology 6 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 15; Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (London: SCM, 1985), 223–24; B. Otzen, "The Use of Myth in Genesis," in *Myths in the Old Testament*, ed. B. Otzen et al. (London: SCM, 1980), 32; T. E. Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 342–43, 356.

[61] *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*, ed. K. Crim (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), under "Chaos," 144.

[62] Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction*, 38.

[63] W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965), 1353–54.

[64] Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, 23.

[65] Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 157.

The nuanced function of תהום in biblical creation texts and its reappropriation in Revelation demands a hermeneutic sensitive to symbolic polyvalence and contextual specificity. Rather than assuming a direct continuity with Ancient Near Eastern mythologies, the biblical usage of תהום reflects a theological reorientation: chaos is not an autonomous force in conflict with God, but a space ordered by divine sovereignty. Revelation's depiction of the beast from the sea appears to echo the chaotic connotations of the תהום tradition but subverts them by employing the sea not as a cosmic opponent but as a backdrop for the emergence of imperial evil. This shift suggests that biblical symbols are not static; they evolve to serve new theological and sociopolitical functions.

This insight is crucial: biblical imagery must be read in context, not simply mined for mythic archetypes. Preaching the sea as chaos without attention to Revelation's immediate narrative may obscure its critique of empire and its pastoral reassurance to oppressed believers. Revelation's symbolic world, therefore, calls for careful, context-driven interpretation—highlighting the dangers of authoritarian regimes while reaffirming God's control over apparent disorder. In this way, Revelation reconfigures an image often read through Gunkel's *chaoskampf* lens into a pastoral grammar of resistance and hope.

Seven Heads

The imagery of the beast's heads appears in Psalm 74:13 and may carry two significations. The first relates to the term *ltn* in Ugaritic literature, which depicts the creature as having seven heads.[69] The second refers to the military leaders of Egypt. Watson favours this interpretation, as the word ראשים more closely corresponds to the depiction of multiple dragons in Psalm 74.[70] Moreover, in the context of this recital of Yahweh's victory, the dragon or Leviathan represents his quintessential foe—namely, Egypt—from whom he redeemed his people.

---

[66] James L. Resseguie, "Narrative Features of the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 49.

[67] Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 57.

[68] Mark B. Stephens, "Creation and New Creation in the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 267.

In Revelation, Satan is portrayed as a red, serpentine dragon with seven heads (Revelation 12:3). This depiction—along with the ten horns and seven diadems—suggests his aspiration to rule.[71] This is evident in his actions to make war on the saints and to conquer them (v. 7). Given its fifty-five occurrences in Revelation, the number seven clearly holds significance. Beyond its Jewish symbolism as a representation of completeness or perfection, each instance of its use in Revelation marks a complete series (Revelation 2:1–3:22; 6:1–8:1; 8:2–11:18; 15:5–16:21). When combined with the imagery of the dragon, this numerical symbolism becomes a hallmark of the counterfeit divine.[72]

Comparable to Revelation 17:10, the seven heads may reflect elements of religious and sociopolitical tension. Staudt demonstrates that early Christians employed a Christological formula to clarify that "the One" they worship differs fundamentally from other forms of worship. In this context, the idioms εἷς ἐστιν and, when necessary, εἷς ἐστιν ὁ θεός were used by Christians to distinguish their God from others (cf. Mark 12:29, 32; Galatians 3:20; James 2:19; 4:12).[73] Thus, Revelation employs the unique idiom ὁ εἷς ἔστιν in reference to the beast with seven heads in Revelation 17 to contrast one head with the others. Based on this, Karrer concludes that the seven heads represent seven kings, and "the one who is" (ὁ εἷς ἔστιν) refers to the Roman emperor at the time (see Revelation 17:10).[74] The author of Revelation, then, uses the idiom ὁ εἷς ἔστιν to draw the reader's attention to "the one." This aligns well with the use of "heads" in Psalm 74 and does not incorporate elements of the chaos myth. However, it should also be noted that, apart from the reference to seven kings, the imagery may at times refer to seven mountains (cf. Revelation 17:9). Because of such possibilities for multiple meanings inherent within Revelation, the most reliable way to interpret each image is by attending to its immediate context.

---

69. M. Dietrich et al., *Die Keilalphabetischen Texte Aus Ugarit. Einschließlich Der Keilalphabetischen Texte Außerhalb Ugarits*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Veröffentlichungen Zur Kultur und Geschichte Des Alten Orients und Des Alten Testaments 24 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976), 1.3.iii.42, 1.5.i.3.

70. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 165.

71. Mitchell G. Reddish, "The Genre of the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 9.

72. Resseguie, "Narrative Features of the Book of Revelation," 47.

73. Darina Staudt, *Der Eine und Einzige Gott: Monotheistische Formeln Im Urchristentum und Ihre Vorgeschichte Bei Griechen und Juden*, Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus / Studien Zur Umwelt Des Neuen Testaments 80 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 304–6.

74. Martin Karrer, "God in the Book of Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 206.

In the narrative of Revelation, the beasts exhibit active aggression against God—a feature which, according to Watson, is not reflected in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Psalm 89).[75] Once again, Revelation draws on and modifies imagery from the Hebrew Bible. The beast from the sea, under Satan's control, blasphemes God (13:5–6) and wages war against God's holy people (13:7). In this context, the rhetorical hymn—"Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?" (13:4)—points the reader to the contrasting worship of God and the Lamb in Revelation 4:11 and 5:12. The aggression and the accompanying hymn together function as a caricature of worship directed toward the beasts, in contrast to the worship of God and the Lamb. Ultimately, this symbolic rhetoric serves to delegitimize the worship of the Roman emperor and the broader Roman imperial apparatus.[76] The entire narrative presents a caricature of Roman imperial power. It forms part of Satan's earthly entourage, as seen in the beast from the sea and the beast from the land. This caricature depicts Roman imperial authority as wholly corrupt and ravenous, standing in complete opposition to God and the Lamb.[77]

The multilayered imagery of the dragon's heads in Revelation—interwoven with echoes from Psalm 74 and the political-religious dynamics of the Roman Empire calls for attention to symbolic critique embedded in socio-political reality. By appropriating and reshaping ancient motifs such as Leviathan and the multi-headed serpent, the author of Revelation constructs a symbolic parody of imperial domination. The use of the number seven—normally a symbol of divine completeness—is co-opted to mark the beast's counterfeit sovereignty, offering a theologically charged critique of Roman totalitarian claims. This is where Revelation diverges most sharply from the Gunkelian chaoskampf paradigm: the seven heads do not signal the re-emergence of primordial disorder but dramatize the imperial system's counterfeit claim to order, completeness, and universal rule.

This theological-political subversion reveals Revelation's rhetorical strategy: not merely to unveil future cataclysms but to awaken moral and liturgical discernment in the present. The seven heads warn readers not to mistake oppressive regimes for divine authority, however complete or omnipotent they may appear. Preaching and teaching on such apocalyptic texts must therefore reclaim their original function that affirms God's sovereignty against evil empire, and as a call for worship that centers on the Lamb, not on political illusions of omnipotence.

---

75. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated*, 188.

76. Justin P. Jeffcoat Schedtler, "The Hymns in Revelation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, ed. Craig R. Koester (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 122.

77. Greg Carey, "The Book of Revelation as Counter-Imperial Script," in *In the Shadow of Empire*, ed. Richard Horsley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 157–76.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Revelation can hardly be considered a "syncretic book."[78] Although the use of imagery is firmly rooted in its own context, logic, and theological intention,[79] its basic motifs and elements are fundamentally grounded in the Hebrew Bible. The imagery of the beasts, sea, and seven heads substantially reflects its usage in the Hebrew Bible. It has also been noted that the concept of chaos imagery is not consistently sustained within the Hebrew Bible itself. Similarly, in Revelation, such imagery—e.g., the sea—does not necessarily represent chaos. While this study assumes that Revelation's readers recognized connections with the Hebrew Bible, it is equally plausible that they were familiar with the wider cultural mythologies of their world. The interplay between biblical and surrounding mythic motifs may therefore have shaped how these readers perceived the text's symbolic universe. However, the imagery in Revelation should always be interpreted in close relation to its immediate context, given the possibilities of multiple meanings associated with the same imagery.

What emerges, then, is not a mythological combat drama but a symbolic parody of imperial power. Revelation appropriates familiar biblical motifs while reshaping them to critique Rome's totalitarian claims and to expose the counterfeit sovereignty of the beast. By turning images such as the sea and the seven heads into emblems of distorted order rather than primordial chaos, John reorients the tradition to serve pastoral and theological ends. This interpretive move both corrects the inertia of Gunkel's paradigm and demonstrates that Revelation's symbolism evolves to meet new socio-political circumstances.

Such a conclusion highlights the need for fresh readings of Revelation that resist over-reliance on Ancient Near Eastern mythological categories. The book's symbolic world is better understood as a theological-political counter-narrative: it affirms God's sovereignty, unmasks the pretensions of empire, and calls the church to discerning worship of the Lamb. In this way, Revelation 13 does not merely recycle chaos imagery but transforms inherited symbols into a rhetoric of resistance and hope amid uncertainty and persecution. Above all, it points to a real hope that is experienced in the present and will be consummated in the coming of the Lamb.

REFERENCES

Anderson, B. W. "Mythopoetic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith." In *Creation in the Old Testament*, edited by B. W. Anderson. Issues in Religion and Theology 6. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Bauckham, Richard. *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*. Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1993.

---

[78] Cf. Robyn Whitaker, "The Poetics of Ekphrasis: Vivid Description and Rhetoric in the Apocalypse," in *Poetik und Intertextualität Der Johannesapokalypse*, ed. Stefan Alkier, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 346 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 228.

[79] Huber, "Imagery in the Book of Revelation," 61–62.

Beagley, A. J. "Beasts, Dragon, Sea, Conflict Motif." In *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, edited by R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Beale, G. K. *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Beale, Gregory K. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Böcher, Otto. *Johannes-Apokalypse*. Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, vol. 18 (1998): 595–646.

Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906.

Carey, Greg. "The Book of Revelation as Counter-Imperial Script." In *In the Shadow of Empire*, edited by Richard Horsley. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008.

Childs, Brevard S. *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*. London: SCM, 1985.

Collins, Adela Yarbo. *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*. Harvard Theological Review 9. Scholars Press, 1976.

Day, John. *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*. Cambridge: Wipf & Stock, 1985.

Dietrich, M., O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartin. *Die Keilalphabetischen Texte Aus Ugarit. Einschließlich Der Keilalphabetischen Texte Außerhalb Ugarits*. Alter Orient Und Altes Testament, Veröffentlichungen Zur Kultur Und Geschichte Des Alten Orients Und Des Alten Testaments 24. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976.

Fretheim, T. E. "The Book of Genesis." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

Gager, John G. *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*. Prentice-Hall Studies in Religion Series. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

Gudeman, Edward. *The Abyss in Revelation: A View from Below*. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 28. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2021.

Gunkel, Hermann. *Schöpfung Und Chaos in Urzeit Und Endzeit: Eine Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung Über Gen 1 Und Ap Joh 12*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1895.

Hartley, John E. *The Book of Job*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.

Herder, Johann Gottfried von. *Vom Geist Der Ebräischen Poesie: Eine Einleitung Für Die Libehaber Derselben Und Der Ältesten Geschichte Des Menschlichen Geistes*. Vol. 1. Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1825.

Huber, Konrad. "Imagery in the Book of Revelation." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, edited by Craig R. Koester. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Karrer, Martin. "God in the Book of Revelation." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, edited by Craig R. Koester. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Kloos, Carola. *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea: A Canaanite Tradition in the Religion of Ancient Israel*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986.

Knight, Douglas A. "Cosmogony and Order in the Hebrew Tradition." In *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics*, edited by R. W. Lovin and F. E. Reynolds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Koester, Craig R. *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897.

Mabie, Frederick J. "Chaos and Death." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, edited by Tremper Longman III and Paul Enns. A Compendiun of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Mowinckel, Sigmund. *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.

Moyise, Steve. "The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, edited by Craig R. Koester. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Otzen, B. “The Use of Myth in Genesis.” In *Myths in the Old Testament*, edited by B. Otzen, H. Gottlieb, and K. Jeppesen. London: SCM, 1980.

Reddish, Mitchell G. “The Genre of the Book of Revelation.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, edited by Craig R. Koester. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Resseguie, James L. “Narrative Features of the Book of Revelation.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, edited by Craig R. Koester. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Rose, H. J. “Chaos.” In *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edited by N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

Saggs, H. W. F. *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel*. London: Athlone Press, 1978.

Schedtler, Justin P. Jeffcoat. “The Hymns in Revelation.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, edited by Craig R. Koester. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Revelation: Vision of a Just World*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

Soden, W. von. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965.

Staudt, Darina. *Der Eine Und Einzige Gott: Monotheistische Formeln Im Urchristentum Und Ihre Vorgeschichte Bei Griechen Und Juden*. Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus / Studien Zur Umwelt Des Neuen Testaments 80. Tübingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011.

Stephens, Mark B. “Creation and New Creation in the Book of Revelation.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Revelation*, edited by Craig R. Koester. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Tsumura, David. *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.

Tsumura, David Toshio. *The Chaoskampf Myth in the Biblical Tradition*. Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 140, no. 4 (2020): 963–70.

Volz, Paul. *Das Neujahrsfest Jahwes (Laubhüttenfest)*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1912.

Wakeman, Mary K. *God’s Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973.

Watson, Rebecca S. *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of “Chaos” in the Hebrew Bible*. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 341. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis: I. Teilband Genesis 1-11*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974.

Whitaker, Robyn. “The Poetics of Ekphrasis: Vivid Description and Rhetoric in the Apocalypse.” In *Poetik Und Intertextualität Der Johannesapokalypse*, edited by Stefan Alkier. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 346. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Zimmermann, Ruben. “Imagery in John: Opening up Paths into the Tangled Thicket of John’s Figurative World.” In *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language*, edited by Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 200. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.