



Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and biblical Israel (Anchor Bible Reference Library)

By Susan Ackerman

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Some of the Bible's most memorable characters are the women in the book of Judges. From Deborah and Jael to Delilah and Samson's mother, these women led the Israelites in battle, used their wits to defeat the enemy, their wiles to seduce mighty men, and their wisdom to prevail on God. In *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen* author Susan Ackerman offers a keen analysis of the main types of women found in Judges and examines other biblical books and ancient Near Eastern literature to demonstrate how these types recur elsewhere. Thorough yet entertaining, her study leaves readers with an understanding of what roles these women played in Israelite society and religion. The first female author to be published in the Anchor Bible Reference Library, Ackerman and her cutting-edge biblical scholarship will be a valuable addition to this venerable series.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Ackerman (a professor of religion at Dartmouth) explores the "remarkable assembly of women... and the multitude of roles they play" in the book of Judges. She identifies in Judges six "types" of women's roles that, she asserts, illuminate not only Hebrew Scripture but a breathtaking range of ancient Near Eastern literature that includes Homer and Christian scripture. Each chapter considers one "type," identified with one or more characters who play an identifiable role in Judges. Deborah and Jael, Israel's two great women warriors, play the role of the "military hero" as well as the priestly role of "cult specialist." The role of the queen mother is represented by the mother of Sisera, the commander defeated by Deborah and Jael. Manoh's wife (Samson's mother) fills the more "powerless" role of mothers, wives and daughters in waiting. The largely autonomous role of the prostitute is represented by Delilah, and the daughters of Shiloh represent the role of the "maidens abducted while dancing." Ackerman deftly weaves together literary criticism and historical analysis, and her discussion of one role illuminates the discussion of another. Particularly enlightening is Ackerman's application of literary forms associated with the Canaanite goddesses Anat and Asherah to stories of biblical women warriors and queen mothers ranging from Judith and Jezebel to Mary. This accessible work could reach a broad audience interested in becoming acquainted with the richly textured character of biblical literature.

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From the Inside Flap

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