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e Oloferne (dir. unknown, 1906, IT) and Léon Gaumont's *Judith et Holopherne* (1909, FR). David J. Shepherd observes that *Jaël et Sisera* "offered many of the attractions" of those earlier Judith-and-Holofernes productions: e.g., a foreign general (the Canaanite Sisera) and a heroine (Jael), who lures him into a false sense of safety before violently doing away with him (Shepherd: 141).

Andréani's film presents six scenes, some of which take obvious liberties with the scriptural text for dramatic effect. Before the book of Judges introduces Jael as the apparently non-Israelite "wife of Heber the Kenite" (4:17a; 5:24a) who lives with him in a camp "separated from the other Kenites" (4:11), the narrative establishes the Israelite prophetess Deborah as the one who communicates to the Israelite military captain Barak the divine command to take his forces to defeat the Canaanite commander Sisera at Mount Tabor (4:4–7, 14), although "the Lord [would] sell Sisera into the hand of a woman [i.e., Jael]" (4:9). In contrast, Andréani's film never mentions Deborah. Instead, (sc. 1) the film opens nonscripturally with Jael as an Israelite woman in Sisera's camp, because her husband Heber is "friendly" with Sisera (cf. Judg 4:17b). There she aids her imprisoned Israelite countrymen, distributing bread and passing an urn among them before she is reprimanded, the urn is knocked away from her, and she prays. By this time, however, she has helped some of the Israelites to escape. Subsequently, (sc. 2) the escaped prisoners reveal the location of Sisera's army to Barak, who embarks to engage the Canaanites in battle (cf. Judg 4:14); (sc. 3) Sisera's army is routed in the "Kishon torrent" (cf. Judg 5:21, approximated in the film by "the rocky French coastline" [Shepherd: 141]; see also Judg 4:7, 13; Ps 83:9); and (sc. 4) Sisera flees his conqueror (Judg 4:15b, 17a). Next, (sc. 5) outside her tent, Sisera implores Jael for refuge in it, which she grants (cf. Judg 4:18). Before she enters behind him, however, she is shown melodramatically clasping her hands in gratitude to God, to whom she prays gazing upward (another embellishment on the text). Once inside the tent with Sisera, she gives him milk to drink (cf. 4:19b; 5:25), and he passes out from exhaustion (cf. 4:21). Unlike her own biblical prototype, who never hesitated to hammer a tent peg fatally into Sisera's head (4:21; 5:26–27), this filmic Jael initially seems unsure what to do, but straightens up in epiphanic ecstasy when she spots the peg and hammer. After she commits the murder by pounding the peg into his head with half a dozen hammer blows, she covers her dead victim with cloths (contrast 4:18–19, where she covers him before killing him), and the film concludes with (sc. 6) the arrival of Barak who, when shown his enemy's corpse by Jael, kneels to kiss her dress's hem, as do some other Israelite soldiers after she exits her tent and is acclaimed by them, their swords upraised, for her deliverance of her people.

V. Film

In contrast to the abundant reception of Jael in literature and visual arts (see above), only one movie to this author's knowledge has ever been devoted to the story of Jael and Sisera (Judg 4:17–23; 5:24–27), the short 1911 Pathé frères silent film, *Jaël et Sisera*, directed by Henri Andréani (FR, see → plate 12). According to the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film's (FIAF) database "Treasures from the Film Archives," only two archives hold copies of this film: the British Film Institute (BFI) in London (where the present author viewed it) and the Cinémathèque française in Paris.

While scripturally, as Judith R. Baskin notes above (see "II. Judaism B. Second Temple through Medieval Judaism"), the eponymous heroine of the book of Judith "is based in great part on Jael," the reverse is true of Andréani's ten-minute Jael film. *Jaël et Sisera* was preceded by at least two films about those two characters' more renowned, later scriptural counterparts, Judith and Holofernes: *Giuditta*

Throughout this otherwise black-and-white film, in order for her to stand out from other characters and her surroundings, the actress playing Jael is tinted in a lavender hue, consistent with the subdued stenciling technique used by Andréani in other biblical films of his from around this time (e.g., *David et Goliath*, 1910, FR, *David and Goliath*; *Moïse sauvé des eaux*, 1911, FR, *Moses Rescued from the Water*; see, e.g., Yumibe: 126–27, though Yumibe does not discuss *Jaël et Sisera*). Shepherd rightly ascribes Andréani's selection and treatment of Jael to "the prominence enjoyed by feminine heroines, often armed and dangerous, within early sensational melodrama" (Shepherd: 142). Yet French audiences also must have recognized in her a heroic kinship with Marianne, the iconic personification of the French Republic and symbol of liberty. (On Marianne, see "Christ, National Images of").

The biblical Jael likely also had an indirect bearing upon the 1916 US film, *The Fall of a Nation*, directed by Thomas Dixon, Jr., author of the 1916 novel of that same title, on which the film was based. Subtitled *A Sequel to the Birth of a Nation* (alluding to D. W. Griffith's controversial 1915 US film glorifying the Ku Klux Klan, *The Birth of a Nation*, which itself was based on Dixon's 1905 novel, *The Clansman*), the novel version of *The Fall of a Nation* tells of the conquest and occupation of the United States by an unnamed, but clearly German, foreign military force, from which the US is only finally "saved" through the heroic actions of a large, clandestine group of women who go by the code name "the Daughters of Jael." When first introduced, they are described thus:

The Daughters of Jael comprised only the wisest women leaders, and with them the strongest and most beautiful girls in the glory of youth...

They were taught in secret two things—to keep their lithe young bodies hard and sun-tanned and learn to wield a steel knife whose blade was eight inches long, slender and keen. When a million had been sworn and trained the order would come to strike for freedom. (Dixon: 335 [ch. 41])

Bibliography: ■ Dixon, T., *The Fall of a Nation* (New York 1916). ■ Shepherd, D. J., *The Bible on Silent Film: Spectacle, Story, and Scripture in the Early Cinema* (Cambridge 2013). ■ Slide, A., *American Racist: The Life and Films of Thomas Dixon* (Lexington, Ky. 2004). ■ Yumibe, J., *Moving Color: Early Film, Mass Culture, Modernism* (New Brunswick, N.J. 2012).

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See also → Deborah (Judge); → Hammer

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