

JOSEPH SCALES

Motivating Violence in Ancient Judaism

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192

Mohr Siebeck

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Joseph Scales

Motivating Violence in Ancient Judaism

Pre-Battle Speeches in Second Temple Literature

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

In June or July 2021, I had begun to develop a research project that would become “Fighting Talk.” The idea arose while reading Bret Devereaux’s blog “A Collection of Unmitigated Pedantry.” Devereaux is a (military) historian who uses his platform to write for a general audience on ancient and military history. I was drawn to his writing on a military historian’s perspective on battle-sequences in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* and the well-known film adaptations, directed by Peter Jackson. In one of these posts, Devereaux touched on some of the pre-battle exhortations portrayed in both the books and films, these scenes being some of my favourite moments on-screen. While reading Devereaux’s thoughts on how these were constructed and some of the scholarship on their ancient counterparts, it struck me that there were similar examples in First Maccabees, and that these might be fruitfully compared. After reading around some of the work of classicists and ancient historians on developments in the study of pre-battle encouragement, I found that these speeches could shed light on how ancient authors and speech-givers tried to motivate their audiences towards organised violence. The elements of their speeches could be analysed to allow us to understand what it was that these speakers emphasised as being so important, the combatants would risk their own lives and be willing to kill – in essence, what are some of the most important things to ancient soldiers. I further found that, while some of the speeches included in ancient Jewish sources had been explored, these had not been collected together and constructed as a specific type of rhetoric.

A project proposal quickly came together, but many funding applications were unsuccessful. I am grateful to all those who read early drafts, responded and offered thoughts, and helped me develop the project outline. Some of those who deserve mention include Jim Aitken†, George Brooke, Charlotte Hempel, Thomas Kazen, Ellena Lyell, Sara Parks, Laura Quick, Cat Quine, Julia Rhyder, Alexander Samely, Shayna Sheinfeld, and Karen Wenell. I also benefitted from an Early-Career Research Associateship with the Institute of Classical Studies at the University of London’s School of Advanced Study. My thanks to Katherine Harloe and Valerie James for this opportunity, which connected me with Michael Wuk. Michael shared his MSCA application with me, aiding me with the next step in this project.

In April 2022, Årstein Justnes reached out to me and expressed an interest in my work. I must thank Ingrid Breilid Gimse for her role in establishing this relationship. Justnes asked if I would be willing to work at the University of Agder (UiA) and pursue my research there. I was excited that someone was interested in my ideas and wanted to explore working with me, so jumped at the opportunity. The specifics of this became an application to Horizon Europe's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. The application and project development were supported by the team at UiA. In particular, the work of Petter Zahl Marki refined the project, and I am sure that the funding application was successful in large part because of his efforts. Inger Lin Nystad Baade's support throughout the operation of the project has also been essential for the various activities undertaken.

As mentioned, and somewhat to my surprise, the MSCA application was successful and in July 2023, Kathryn and I found ourselves in Norway. At this stage, I had begun the book based on a particular structure and had made a little headway, although I had certainly underestimated the demands of writing a book essentially in my spare time. Over the course of my two-year fellowship, the shape of this book has changed, and I have decided that a thematic analysis of the complete corpus of ancient Jewish pre-battle speeches would be the best way to go about discussing this subject. During this time, I have appreciated the many inputs from colleagues or guests at UiA, and from broader Norwegian research groups, including support from our instituttleder Reidar Salvesen, and the valuable input on my writing from Ingrid Breilid Gimse, Charles Comerford, Stefan Fisher-Høyrem, Kjetil Hannevik Friestad, Berit Huntebrinker, Ludvik Andreas Kjeldsberg, Dana Ryan Lande, Liv Ingeborg Lied, Matthew Monger, Michael Press, Morten Beckmann, Nils Hallvard Korsvoll, Stephen Reed, and Tor Vegge.

As part of this project, I convened a workshop in June 2024 in Kristiansand where scholars considered aspects of rhetoric and ancient warfare, with a special focus on ancient Judaism. Presenters at this workshop included Suzanne Adema, Katell Berthelot, Seth Bledsoe, Michael DeVries, Torleif Elgvin, Eelco Glas, Gillian Glass, Thomas Kazen, Alice König, Jacob Mortensen, Emanuel Pfoh, and Elisa Uusimäki. Each of these presenters gave excellent papers, and the various discussions we had during and around the papers have been of the utmost value to the completion of this book. I have benefited from prior and subsequent conversations with many of these scholars who graciously participated in the conference. In particular, the "Aarhus contingent" from Uusimäki's ERC project ANINAN (Uusimäki, Glas, and Glass) have maintained an ongoing discursive space for my own thinking. This was highlighted during a visit to Aarhus in March 2025 where I was fortunate to present some emerging ideas to the group. I thank them for their gracious hosting and input to my thoughts.

I am also grateful to the colleagues who have collaborated and co-authored on various projects with me during this period, including Ekaterina Kozlova, Laura Quick, Isaac Soon, and Katie Turner. Each of these has impacted my thinking and work beyond our written output and I am thankful to each for their willingness to share their expertise. To others I have neglected to mention here, many thanks for your interactions and apologies for my oversight.

My thanks to the UiA Greek Reading Group. Their help with translations, questions, comments, and encouragement has helped me work through the Greek texts closely and understand these texts more deeply than I otherwise may have. The Holy Scriptures and Authoritative Texts forum at UiA has been a fantastic group to test ideas and receive feedback. Their collective input has greatly shaped my project and this book. The wider research support network at UiA has also been instrumental to my academic and personal development, from the finance and personnel consultants to arrangement coordinators, research support advisers and library staff, language teachers, and all the other support and administrative employees who facilitate the work that goes on at the institution. The final writing and revision of this book was undertaken at the Institutt for arkeologi, historie, kultur- og religionsvitenskap at the University of Bergen and I am grateful for the space to finish up the work of this project here.

Further thanks to the editors and reviewer for TSAJ for accepting this book into their series and for their suggestions to improve the manuscript. These have been enthusiastically received, and I hope that you can see the fruit of your suggestions herein. Tobias Ståbler and Markus Kirchner were instrumental in the submission and production process and are greatly appreciated.

The universities of Bergen and Agder have generously funded the open access publication of *Motivating Violence*. I am immensely grateful that this was a possibility and appreciate that I am able to honour both my former institution where the research and much of the writing of this book was undertaken, and my current institution where I hope that this will be a fitting example of the intellectual milieu of which I have become part.

This book has also been vastly improved thanks to many edits suggested by Kathryn Scales. She has clarified my meaning and prevented many cases where my English adopted either a Norwegian or completely idiosyncratic syntax. Kathryn has rejected being listed as a co-author as she says she only put my words in the correct order, but I remain incredibly indebted to her for her work.

June 2026, Bergen

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations for series and journals follow *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. Below are abbreviations used in this work, following SBL and including additional entries.

AB	Anchor Bible
AIL	Ancient Israel and Its Literature
AJEC/AGJU	Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity/Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
APOT	<i>The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by Robert H. Charles. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1913.
ASCP	Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar
BIOSCS	<i>Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BSJS	Brill's Series in Jewish Studies
BzAltertum	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CDCH	<i>The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> . Edited by David J. A. Clines. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009.
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
CJA	Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series
ClAnt	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CRPG	Culture, Religion, and Politics in the Greco-Roman World

CSCT	Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DCLY	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook
<i>DSSR</i>	<i>The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader</i> . Edited by Donald Parry, Emanuel Tov and Geraldine I. Clements. 2 nd rev. ed. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
FJTC	Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAP	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
<i>GELS</i>	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint</i> . Takamitsu Muraoka. Leuven: Peeters, 2009.
<i>GR</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HRE	Historiography of Rome and Its Empire
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>HTS Theological Studies</i> (formerly <i>Hervormde theologiese studies</i>)
<i>JAH</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient History</i>
<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JGRChJ</i>	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JIBS</i>	<i>Journal for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSCS</i>	<i>Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>
<i>JSHRZ</i>	<i>Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>

JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>JSQ</i>	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
MnS	Mnemosyne, Supplements
NETS	<i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> . Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Old Testament Message
OTS	Old Testament Studies
PACS	Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
Rahlfs-Hanhart	Rahlfs, Alfred. <i>Septuaginta</i> . Revised by Robert Hanhart. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBS	Resources for Biblical Study
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RevScRel</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
RGZM	Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SJ	Studia Judaica
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SPhA	Studies in Philo of Alexandria
SPhiloA	Studia Philonica Annual
SSU	Studia Semitica Upsaliensia
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia Post-biblica
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SymS	Symposium Series
<i>TC</i>	<i>Trends in Classics</i>
TCSup	Trends in Classics Supplementary Volumes
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum

WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

“It is easy for many to be ensnared by the hands of a few. And it makes no difference before heaven to save by many or by a few. For victory in war is not in the multitude of force, but rather, the power is from heaven. They come against us with great arrogance and lawlessness, to eliminate us and our wives and our children, to despoil us. But we fight for our lives and our precepts, and he himself will smash them before us. You, therefore, do not be afraid of them.”

Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc 3:18–22 [NETS])

This book addresses the rhetoric of warfare, specifically within and as expressed by ancient Jewish texts. To add to this vast field of research, ranging from some of the earliest Greek epics and histories, through to modern conflicts, I have sought to develop a new framework by which we can access the ancient world. In doing so, I aim to assess afresh some of the violent legacies of texts that have held an important place in various histories of the world. Of the works selected for this study, some are found in the Tanakh, and many more in Christian bibles. These works have contributed to a vast and varied array of cultural understandings for the constitution of appropriate resistance, justifications for violence, and even expectations for the outcome of warfare. My contention is that by establishing a framework to situate these specific texts within a cultural milieu and analysing them together, we can begin to unpack some of the ideology inherent in a long-standing tradition of warfare rhetoric. This will be undertaken by analysing the presentation and content of pre-battle speeches in ancient Judaism. This discussion will examine the means by which warfare was justified in antiquity, exploring how the pre-battle speech, otherwise described as a pre-battle exhortation or harangue, was presented as a means to motivate violence in ancient Jewish works.¹

¹ Throughout this book, I will use terms for the pre-battle speech interchangeably and without distinction. On the Greek and Latin counterpart terminology, see Jon E. Lendon, “Battle Descriptions in the Ancient Historians, Part II: Speeches, Results, and Sea Battles,” *GR* 64.2 (2017): 145. For the ways in which Greek authors referred to such speeches technically, see Josef Albertus, *Die Παρακλητικοί in der griechischen und römischen Literatur*, *Dissertationes philologicae Argentoratenses selectae* 13.2 (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1908), 9–16.

A. Pre-battle speeches between oration and narrative

It has long been recognised that texts about war and warfare shed light on the culture from which such texts originate. Susan Niditch observed that regardless of the authenticity of the situation portrayed in a war narrative of the Hebrew Bible, each of these narratives provides us with “information about their authors’ ideologies, world-views, and attitudes.”² Here Niditch refers to something of key importance for this study; that representations of organised violence are imbued with deeper meaning. A speech in the context of a specific battle may show something about how this battle was understood, the perspective of the speaker, and something of the author’s feeling for the purpose of the battle, but moreover, such a speech must draw from accepted ideas of appropriate motivational causes. If a culture does not value something, then it cannot be an effective motivation towards violence. That a cause and a framework for such encouragement is present in a text, and even further, appears across many texts, is suggestive of a wider set of values, ideologies, and significant factors for life. The variation of these features between cultures gives the impression that the things used to motivate violence that selectively draw from previous traditions, and that the meaning of such motivating factors changes over time and between cultures.

People resort to violence for all kinds of reasons. In instances of organised violence, such as in warfare, combatants are often incited towards their actions by others. In the ancient world, such incitement often took the form of a pre-battle speech. Ancient literature contains many examples of such speeches, often thought to be entirely the creation of a given author as opposed to reliable accounts of words given on a battlefield. However, recent research suggests that the specifics of how such speeches are constructed are a mediation between accepted forms of style within an author’s experience of both other literary works, and experience they may have had either as a combatant or commander who performed such a speech themselves.³ Literary representations of pre-battle exhortations and their real-life counterparts existed in a potentially

² Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 12.

³ This begins at least with Thucydides, who draws from his own battlefield experience; Simon Hornblower, *Thucydides* (repr. London: Duckworth, 2000), 157–159. Significantly for this study, Josephus also purportedly gives his own speeches, and was present for the lengthy speech of Titus. Commenting on this and the experience of being a hostage, Aaron L. Beek (“The Hostages’ Tales: The Effects of Prisoners’ Trauma on the Writings of Polybius and Josephus,” in *Turmoil, Trauma and Tenacity in Early Jewish Literature*, eds. Nicholas P. L. Allen and Jacob J. T. Doedens, DCLS 50 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022], 187–203) suggests that Josephus could have taken inspiration from Polybius in centring the importance of his own witnessing of war, and also in his role as an advocate for his own people while a hostage.

reciprocal relationship; a good speech might influence an author, while a well-versed commander may draw from their literary knowledge. To unpack this, this book will consider examples of pre-battle speeches recorded in ancient Jewish literature in order to examine how such speeches reflect forms of motivation to violence within Judaism, and to further explore the relationship between literary representations of pre-battle exhortations and their oral counterparts.⁴ This will not be restricted to an exploration of the question of whether any given speech took place, but will think about how such speeches reflect questions of identity formation, in-group/out-group distinctions, and the promotion of causes that are sufficiently important to risk one's life or to kill.

Scholarship on pre-battle speeches in ancient Greek and Roman sources has undergone a floruit in recent years.⁵ For a time, the key question over which authors pushed back and forth concerned the question I have just discussed; did such speeches really happen? This concentration of work and discussion has given way to developing insights and interests into the meaning of pre-battle speeches, often within a specific text or textual tradition, or thought about how such forms of speech relate to narrative, characterisation and more. Yet for all this renewed attention, comparatively little has been lavished on ancient Jewish texts. With some exceptions, these speeches have not been considered to any large degree and have not been collected together under one categorisation. To date, there has been some literature which considers

⁴ A different but related category of speeches worth noting in passing are those of Hadrian, inscribed during a visit to North Africa in 128 CE. For an analysis of these inscriptions, see Michael P. Speidel, *Emperor Hadrian's Speeches to the African Army: A New Text*, RGZM 65 (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2006).

⁵ Recent works of key importance for my own study include: Suzanne Adema, "Encouraging Troops, Persuading Narratees: Pre-Battle Exhortations in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* as a Narrative Device," in *The Art of History: Literary Perspectives on Greek and Roman Historiography*, eds. Vasileios Liotsakis and Scott T. Farrington, TCSup 41 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 219–239; *eadem*, *Speech and Thought in Latin War Narratives: Words of Warriors*, ASCP 24 (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Edward Anson, "The General's Pre-Battle Exhortation in Graeco-Roman Warfare," *GR* 57.2 (2010): 304–318; Jon Coulston, "Courage and Cowardice in the Roman Imperial Army," *War in History* 20.1 (2013): 7–31; Juan Carlos Iglesias Zoido, "The Battle Exhortation in Ancient Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 25.2 (2007): 141–158; *idem*, "The Pre-Battle Speeches of Alexander at Issus and Gaugamela," *GRBS* 50 (2010): 215–241; Lendon, "Battle Descriptions Part II;" Alessandro Rolim de Moura, "Lucan 7: Speeches at War," in *Lucan's "Bellum Civile": Between Epic Tradition and Aesthetic Innovation*, eds. Nicola Hömke and Christiane Reitz, BzAltertum 282 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 71–90; Christoph Schwameis and Jan R. Telg genannt Kortmann, "Exhortations in Silius Italicus' *Punica*," in *Direct Speech in Greek and Latin Epic: Expanding the Methods and Canon*, eds. Christopher W. Forstall and Berenice Verhelst, The Language of Classical Literature 43 (Leiden: Brill, 2026), 83–103; Vasiliki Zali, *The Shape of Herodotean Rhetoric: A Study of the Speeches in Herodotus' Histories with Special Attention to Books 5–9*, International Studies in the History of Rhetoric 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), particularly 237–302.

individual speeches, or speeches known from one specific text.⁶ The insights from recent analysis on Greek and Roman pre-battle speeches have largely not been integrated into the study of ancient Jewish literature.⁷ Firstly, the potential connections between ancient authors' experience of warfare and pre-battle orations and literary representations of such speeches has been unexamined. Secondly, the classification of Jewish pre-battle speech has not been created from the available evidence.

This book will ask how accounts of pre-battle speeches in warfare reflect and draw upon culturally-situated motivating forces towards violence. To address this question, I will consider a variety of factors related to literary speeches found in Jewish texts written or circulating in the Second Temple period (i.e., c. late sixth century BCE to late first century CE). These factors include the type of warfare or conflict which the speech relates to, potential literary influences and networks which may have influenced the writing of such speeches, and the audience, genre and language of the work where such a speech has been preserved. These factors will be important to understand how violence was motivated in specific circumstances and what forms of motivation were sufficient for any kind of organised violence. Additional questions around identity, gender, and translation will be of importance when considering the various characters who give pre-battle speeches, and given the fact that the speeches collected herein are known in their earliest forms in Hebrew and/or Greek.

⁶ See Bezalel Bar-Kochva, "Hellenistic Warfare in Jonathan's Campaign near Azotos," *SCI* 2 (1975): 83–96; Louis H. Feldman, "Moses the General and the Battle against Midian in Philo," *JSQ* 14 (2007): 11–12 (near identical text in *idem*, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism*, CJA 15 [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007], 213–214).

Stand-out studies worth mentioning for their deft handling of specific Jewish speeches within the wider Greco-Roman corpus of pre-battle speeches on First and Second Maccabees include Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 175–177, and Roger Tomes, "Heroism in 1 and 2 Maccabees," *BiblInt* 15.2 (2007): 171–199. On select speeches in the works of Josephus, both Caryn A. Reeder, "Gender, War, and Josephus," *JSJ* 46.1 (2015): 71–75, and Jan Willem van Henten, *Judean Antiquities* 15, ed. Steve Mason, FJTC 7b (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 82–100. On the War Scroll, Steven Weitzman, "Warring against Terror: The *War Scroll* and the Mobilization of Emotion," *JSJ* 40.2 (2009): 221–227.

⁷ This may be in part due to a low-regard scholars have had for the historical importance of such speeches, typified by the summative statement of Bezalel Bar-Kochva on the speeches present in First Maccabees. He writes that such speeches were "always the author's pure invention and contribute only to the understanding of his historiographical purposes and religious beliefs." See Bezalel Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army: Organization and Tactics in the Great Campaigns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 299. These remarks were reiterated and expanded in *idem*, *Judas Maccabaeus: The Jewish Struggle against the Seleucids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 63, 146, 156–157.

A question which appears to have influenced the reception of these written pre-speeches in the study of ancient Jewish texts is whether they were solely literary. That is, were such speeches ever given in the form and with the full content on a battlefield as they are so often presented? This question has occupied historians for some time, and it is worth briefly exploring some of the ideas which have been ventured in relation to it.

Some studies have approached the question by examining the possibilities of the human voice when giving an oration. This dimension was examined notably by Mogens Herman Hansen, who explored questions related to literary style and whether even practically such speeches could have been given.⁸ Hansen was largely sceptical of any correspondence between the lengthy and finely crafted speeches best known from Thucydides, and any words uttered by generals on ancient battlefields. Responding to Hansen's arguments, Edward Anson cites studies that provide distances and audience numbers which could be reasonably expected to comprehend an oration, arriving at an estimate of around 1,200 battle speech addressees.⁹

Such considerations are perhaps unnecessary; we do not know whom exactly such speeches were intended to encourage. A limited number of witnesses, specific units or sub-commanders, or others may have been the intended audience, if such speeches did indeed take place. Nevertheless, our ancient sources from Greek and Roman military leaders suggest that such speeches were expected to be given, regardless of whether the full number of combatants were able to receive their commanders' words.

Anson further presents some summative findings from an analysis of pre-battle speeches in the works of Thucydides, Xenophon, Ammianus, and Julius

⁸ On the practicalities of giving a pre-battle speech, Mogens Herman Hansen, "The Battle Exhortation in Ancient Historiography. Fact or Fiction?" *Historia* 42.2 (1993): 169–172. A number of short notes were published following this article which addressed this specific objection, providing sources that suggested the human voice has credibly been reported to have reached an audience of multiple thousands; Michael Clark, "Did Thucydides Invent the Battle Exhortation?" *Historia* 44.3 (1995): 375–376. C. T. H. R. Ehrhardt ("Speeches before Battle?" *Historia* 44.1 [1995]: 120–121) notes that at least Caesar represented a pre-battle speech as something that would be given even in the event of an ambush, suggesting it was commonly deployed. Other critiques of Hansen's wider argument can be found in Iglesias Zoido, "Battle Exhortation," 142–143; W. Kendrick Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Battle Speeches and a Palfrey*, APXAIÁ EΛΛΑΣ: Monographs on Ancient Greek History and Archaeology 9 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2002), 1–7, and on the practicalities of the range of a human voice, 52–65. Hansen responded to these critiques and largely re-intrenched his position in Mogens Herman Hansen, "The Little Grey Horse—Henry V's Speech at Agincourt and the Battle Exhortation in Ancient Historiography," *Histos* 2 (1998): 46–63.

⁹ Anson, "Pre-Battle Exhortation," 306–309. Audiences of such sizes (c. 1000 soldiers) are accepted by Hansen ("Little Grey Horse," 58–59) but he argues that these are the upper size limits of an audience a stationary speaker could hope to audibly reach.

Caesar.¹⁰ He writes, “what is clear is that the pre-battle exhortation was a common practice.”¹¹ Furthermore, Anson suggests that speeches reported in the works of writers with military experience are typically short; historians subsequently “would embellish these speeches, even to the point of invention,” yet these embellished speeches may still preserve a core of historical reality in the depiction of the practice of giving such speeches, and the themes used within them.¹²

Indeed, the commonality of such speeches, and restrictions to their content from the circumstances of the battle itself, or that the battle was also written about by a previous author, may have placed limits on what an author felt able to introduce. As put by Jon Lendon, “the audience already ‘knew’ what such speeches should say, and that their sentiments should and must be commonplace.”¹³ Lendon goes on to ask if “the battle speeches [are] ‘fictional’ in any meaningful sense? And does it matter?”¹⁴ We must turn to this important consideration, that arrives at the heart of the central question of this book – what do these speeches actually tell us?

The *realia* of any given recorded speech in this study are immaterial to a degree. What can be drawn from comparative analysis of speeches written over a relatively long period of time, in two languages, and within a cohesive (if broadly constructed) minority culture is some understanding of how commanders’ motivation in warfare was conceived within ancient Judaism. We should read such speeches as literary units created within a wider milieu of cultural reasoning towards collective violence, and even if such speeches are not to be accepted as “historically accurate,” it is meaningful to address and understand the reasons why such speeches were written down and why they use the form and content preserved in our sources.

In some of the texts discussed in this book, it is indeed obvious that such speeches were never given in the form we have them. Perhaps the most transparent examples are the speeches of Moses as presented by Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus. The great temporal distance between the latter’s writing and the purported life of Moses, the lack of speeches in the form written by Philo or Josephus in their known sources, and ultimately our uncertainty about whether Moses even existed to give such speeches are all key and perhaps irresolvable considerations that must be addressed in order to provide a meaningful answer to the relationship between a pre-battle speech as recorded and as given on the battlefield. Yet these speeches shed light on both Philo and

¹⁰ Cf. analysis of the speeches in Homer, Herodotus, Polybius, Xenophon and Thucydides in Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Battle Speeches*, 25–51.

¹¹ Anson, “Pre-Battle Exhortation,” 317.

¹² Anson, “Pre-Battle Exhortation,” 318.

¹³ Lendon, “Battle Descriptions Part II,” 150.

¹⁴ Lendon, “Battle Descriptions Part II,” 152.

Josephus' understanding of Moses, his and more general good generalship, and the appropriate form of the pre-battle speech as informed by their own experiences and reading. We might find more comprehensive results and gain greater understanding of ancient Judaism by fixing our inquiry on what these speeches show about how motivations to violence were conveyed, understood, described and likely enacted in the late Second Temple period.

It is often noted that the form of the battle speech has remained relatively consistent since it was largely invented in literature by Thucydides.¹⁵ Thucydides established many of the literary conventions of pre-battle speeches in his works, and his influence can be seen in many works from antiquity. We should understand these works as participating in a constellation of ancient Mediterranean literature, a constellation that influenced readers who became speech-givers and/or writers.¹⁶ Military leaders probably drew from influential texts like Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*.¹⁷ In some cases, like that

¹⁵ Thucydides was the originator of such speeches as an integral aspect of historiography, see Albertus, *Die Παρακλήτικοι*, 7. The influence of Thucydides is also apparent in subsequent examples throughout history. For example, see Anson ("Pre-Battle Exhortation," 317), who draws attention to a speech given by George S. Patton in the twentieth century, and advice given to prospective commanders about such speeches from Cicero and Quintilian in antiquity, to Thomas Sheridan in the eighteenth century and the modern US Army *Field Manual*. Cf. Iglesias Zoido, "Battle Exhortation," 141. For an overview of the form throughout particularly European history, see B. Hambsch, "Feldherrnrede," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, eds. Gert Ueding et al., vol. 3 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1996), 225–238.

¹⁶ I use "readers" to indicate the audience of a given work. This is inclusive of varieties of textual engagement in antiquity, wherein collective reading to audiences was more typically the norm to engage with at least some of the texts. In the final chapter, I will discuss the effects of pre-battle speeches on "readers and hearers" to more fully signal the ways in which an audience would encounter these texts in antiquity and beyond.

¹⁷ Although Anson ("Pre-Battle Exhortation," 309–312) determines that there are only three speeches recorded by Thucydides to troops assembled in battle formation, and of these, only one is given to an audience who could have at least practically heard the speech. Albertus (*Die Παρακλήτικοι*, 28–29) identifies twelve such speeches in Thucydides. Cf. Antonis Tsakmakis and Charalambos Themistokleous, "Textual Structure and Modality in Thucydides' Military Exhortations," in *Thucydides Between History and Literature*, eds. Antonis Tsakmakis and Melina Tamiolaki, TCSup 17 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 391–408, and the fifteen instances in Thucydides briefly treated in Graham Anthony Landon, "The Speeches in Herodotus and Thucydides: A Comparison" (PhD diss., University of Kent, 2017), 187–188. More generally, Josephus appears to have drawn from Thucydides in his *Antiquities*; see H. St. John Thackeray (*Josephus: The Man and the Historian* [New York: Jewish Institute of Religion, 1929], 110–114), who credits this influence to one of Josephus' (likely enslaved) assistants. This idea has been roundly critiqued in subsequent scholarship, although the influence from the source is clear, even if the mechanism of influence is incorrect; against Thackeray, see Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and His Society*, Classical Life and Letters (London: Duckworth, 1983), 233–236; R. J. H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London: SPCK, 1961), 30–35, 64–75.

of Josephus, we have an author who places battle speeches in the mouths of Jewish and non-Jewish commanders. He himself had experience of warfare and was present when some of these speeches were purported to have happened. It is also known that he drew from Greek historiographical forms to create his own works.¹⁸

Other scholars have commented on the generic nature of many pre-battle exhortations when presented in short forms. Elements such as the assurance of victory and of divine aid or support, recollection of past success in battle, and an injunction towards courage are almost always included, with some variation.¹⁹ Lendon compares these generic motifs to “Saehrimnir, the Swine of Asgard, from whom chops are cut each day to feed the heroes who feast in Valhalla, and who puts forth new chops the next day: Ever generous of his meat is Saehrimnir, but the meat is always pork.”²⁰ When we encounter examples of pre-battle speeches, we are often limited to the repetition of the same motifs, over and over again. Yet this repetition is intelligible as part of the ritual function of these speeches, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

At the same time, there are a great breadth of concerns shown across the assembled corpus. It cannot be said that the texts collected here resemble one another more closely than examples which stand outside the Jewish tradition. For instance, the speeches in Josephus’ *Jewish War* compare much more comprehensively to those known from Greek and Roman sources than they do to Jewish forerunners in Chronicles. Yet the collection here illustrates the wide range of possibilities for ancient Jewish authors. We must be reminded again and again that Jewish expression in antiquity (and ever since) is richly diverse.

¹⁸ A caveat is that we do not know when Josephus was exposed to Thucydides’ text, whether before the events of the First Jewish War or afterwards. Josephus typically presents speech in the form of political orations in his *War*, while speech in *Antiquities* varies more and when we have access to his sources as with the Hebrew Bible, it is apparent that he elaborates pre-existing speeches in places, and invents them elsewhere; see Christopher P. Jones, “Josephus and Greek Literature in Flavian Rome,” in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, eds. Jonathan Edmonson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 201–208, 204.

¹⁹ Albertus, *Die Παρακλητικοί*, 49, notes that pre-battle speeches conclude with a formal call to valour [“Ein förmlicher Schluß in Gestalt einer dringenden, zur Tapferkeit auffordernden Endermahnung fehlt wohl keinem παρακλητικός”]. See further, for example, the summaries of general elements in Iglesias Zoido, “Battle Exhortation,” 142–143; Elizabeth Keitel, “Homeric Antecedents to the *Cohortatio* in the Ancient Historians,” *CW* 80.3 (1987): 154; *eadem*, “Otho’s Exhortations in Tacitus’ *Histories*,” *GR* 34.1 (1987): 74–75; Jon E. Lendon, “Battle Descriptions in the Ancient Historians, Part I: Structure, Array, and Fighting,” *GR* 64.1 (2017): 44–45; Keith Yellin, *Battle Exhortation: The Rhetoric of Combat Leadership* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 16–17 (here drawing from Raimondo Montecuccoli’s *Concerning Battle*).

²⁰ Lendon, “Battle Descriptions Part I,” 45.

While certain works such as Deuteronomy 20 received much engagement in subsequent texts, there are no clear developments from a certain kind of pre-battle speech in the Hebrew Bible to another variety in Josephus. While there are many points of contact between the speeches contained within this corpus of ancient Jewish pre-battle speeches, and over time, the corpus expands upon earlier traditions, it cannot be said that these are chains of development. There is simply not enough evidence to make any quantitative statements concerning how such speeches changed over time. Remarks that concern development over time will therefore largely be limited to where works clearly rework earlier material and general observations on differences between earlier and later texts in the corpus.

Pre-battle speeches (and speeches made in and around warfare more generally) are important not only for the immediate context in which a speech is reportedly given, but also as a way for a narrator to convey information. For example, Suzanne Adema has discussed how representations of speech and thought in Latin war narratives serve to emphasise an author's perspective on the nature of war. For instance, in Caesar's *Gallic War*, the narrator presents warfare as something that can be planned for and predicted; a suitably accomplished general can effectively determine the outcome of conflict.²¹ For another Latin author, Vergil, war is portrayed in the speech and thoughts of warriors simultaneously as a necessary undertaking and a means for combatants to achieve glory, and yet also something which leaves a negative and indelible mark on those who experience it.²²

B. Jewish sources as narratives

The sources collected and analysed throughout are generally understood as ancient Jewish sources, but this comes with some caveats worth bearing in mind when they are studied *as* a coherent corpus. Briefly, we should address the individual histories of transmission and reception of the texts which form the core of this book, and how these distinct processes may affect the overall impression of the ancient Jewish pre-battle speech.

These sources have been examined through great scholarly effort and across a huge body of literature. As briefly stated, these works each have an individual history, having passed through many hands and considered by many readers.

²¹ Adema, "Encouraging Troops," 226, 236; *eadem*, *Speech and Thought*, 236–237. See also Christina Shuttleworth Kraus, "Divide and Conquer: Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 7," in *Ancient Historiography and its Contexts: Studies in Honour of A. J. Woodman*, eds. Christina S. Kraus, John Marincola, and Christopher Pelling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 40–59, particularly 58 on comparisons between generals through their speeches.

²² Adema, *Speech and Thought*, 368–371.

While they are all considered Jewish works, not all were kept within Jewish traditions. In this study alone, we will consider works from multiple sub-collections. Firstly, there are those that were retained in the Tanakh, but also known in Greek and subsequent translations, which contributed towards their adoption and use in Christian circles. These works came to be considered authoritative and were gathered into collections with other literature, the Old Testament for Christians, individually in the Torah, *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim*. Primarily in this group, the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua and Chronicles are relevant to this study. Secondly, there are those texts that were not transmitted by Jewish groups after antiquity but retained an authoritative use within Christian circles. These were transmitted initially only in Greek, and of our examples, no known ancient Hebrew versions remain, if they ever existed. In this grouping, the books of First and Second Maccabees, and Judith can be counted. Thirdly, the works of Jewish authors, whose writing was not considered part of an authoritative tradition of something approaching scripture, but who were important witnesses to the Jewish world around the time of Jesus. As such, they were preserved by Christian authors, who found counterpart philosophies to their own, or else historical information relating to the background of New Testament literature. Among this third category are the works of Philo and Josephus. This is not to say that they were forgotten entirely among Jewish authors; the *Sefer Josippon* attests to a legacy of Josephus' works within Jewish communities. Fourthly, and finally for the purposes of this study, are works that were forgotten. By chance of preservation, manuscripts found in the region of the Dead Sea offer further material for our analysis, in textual material which was not preserved among Jews, Christians, or by any other. In this grouping, the War Scroll provides us further examples of Jewish pre-battle speeches.

This is not an exhaustive or complete list of the various ways in which ancient Jewish literature has remained in circulation and available for modern study. The different ways and groups by which ancient Jewish works were kept, and the purposes for such preservation should alert modern readers to a methodological problem. The people from whom these works emerged could not control the ongoing reception of these works, and other works which are now beyond recovery could well have affected how we understand ancient Jewish authors and their culture. All we are left with which to examine ancient Jewish pre-battle speeches comes from works that may not be representative, and for the most part were only kept by people from outside the tradition, or were only accidental survivors. We must also consider that we can only reconstruct on the basis of materials that subsequent generations thought worth keeping, and perhaps what was worth keeping and transmitting involved the removal of elements intrinsic to earlier forms of pre-battle speeches.

Finally, and for the most part, these pre-battle speeches are embedded within war narratives. Thus, the idea of the pre-battle speech as a *topos* within ancient Jewish texts is a wholly literary phenomenon, which may or may not have

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