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Josephus' "rewritten Bible" as a non-apologetic work

The apologetic character of Books 1-11 of the *Jewish Antiquities* has long been overemphasized in the Josephus scholarship. According to the standard view, Josephus sets the criteria of critical historiography aside and follows a twofold apologetic agenda: he addresses a pagan readership in defence of the Jewish people on the one hand, and a Jewish one to make amends for the *Jewish War* on the other. Such view stands on two assumptions: first that the *Antiquities* is a badly written piece of history; and second that Josephus is no more a beneficiary of governmental financial support during the composition of the *Jewish Antiquities*. My paper argues that these assumptions are ungrounded: far from being a defensive work, the *Antiquities* is a good piece of history the *Sitz im Leben* of which is hardly different from that of the *War*. The paper first summarises the arguments against the apologetic character of Books 1-11 of the *Antiquities*, then the arguments for their historical character. The third and last section attempts to redefine the aim of Josephus' "rewritten Bible" as an endeavour to make the Jewish political constitution and the corresponding philosophy comprehensible to a favourable non-Jewish audience.