DJD edition. His book is also at a more general level a fruitful investigation into poetic genres of late Second Temple Judaism.

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This is the seventh volume to appear in this important series, and it is the second to appear with a small letter b following the volume number. Apparently, when all is said and done, the Brill Commentary on Josephus will be sizably uneven. Earlier in the life of this series, Antiquities 1-4, 5-7 and 8-10 were covered in single volumes. The present publication signals that a good deal of the latter half of Antiquities may be covered much more thoroughly, with individual volumes devoted to single Josephan books. Commentary is not architecture, so arguably more is more. But the costs too are considerable, whether measured in the length of time scholars will have to wait until the series is complete, or in the monetary costs of the hardcover volumes for libraries and individuals subscribing to the series. And there is an additional challenge, for the reader and reviewer alike: the present volume will have to stand on its own until 7a and 7c (or even 7d?) appear.

The body of the volume opens, sensibly enough, with a helpful summary of the contents of Antiquities 15 (3-4). At the end of the summary, we are told that “a synthesis of Josephus’ presentation of Herod in Antiquities will be given in the excursus following 17.199” (4). As expected the bulk of the volume (5-326) consists of a fresh translation of, and detailed notes on, Antiquities 15. The notes appear rather frequently—more than seven per passage, on average, for a total of 3,078. Some of the notes are extensive: For example, n.1037 (to Ant. 15.176) treats the dual narratives of Herod’s execution of Hyrcanus, extending to cover nearly three full columns of text (116-17). There is a single stand-alone Excursus, discussing the account of Mariamme’s death in 15.161-236 and its relation to the account of family intrigue in 15.62-87 (164-67). The front matter of the volume includes a list of maps (vii), the Series Preface (by Mason; ix-xii), the volume’s Preface and Acknowledgments (by van Henten; xiii-xiv), lists of
abbreviations and sigla (xvii-xxiii), as well as maps of Judea (xv), Caesarea (xxxiv) and the Herodian Temple (map on p. xxxv; drawing on p. xxxvi). The back matter includes bibliographies of secondary sources (327-43) and primary sources (345-53), as well as indices of ancient texts (355-80), persons and places (381-91), and modern authors (393-97).

The many strengths—and few weaknesses—of this commentary can be seen by looking at two sample sections, and considering their relation to the whole: Herod's “commander speech” (Ant. 15.126-46; pp. 83-100) and the king's reconstruction of the temple (15.380-425; pp. 285-326).

Van Henten's extensive notes on the commander speech highlight the address' rhetorical features and effects in the context of Antiquities, in comparison to the parallel in War 1.373-79, and in relation to Greco-Roman historiographic practices (e.g., 82-83n.704; 84nn.711-12). So here we find a good illustration of van Henten's “narratological” proclivity (cf. xiii). But the annotations are not confined to the literary. Commenting on Herod’s assertion of the war's necessity (15.135), van Henten presents us with fascinating discursive notes on the question of just war in Josephus, Judaism and the Roman world (91-92nn.766-67). Commenting on Herod's mention of heavenly messengers (15.136), van Henten clearly lays out the evidence for each of the two possibilities of these messengers' natures (human or divine; 93n.772). In each of these cases, as in so many others, scholars will find a wealth of information regarding the Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts within which Josephus’ writings are to be understood.

When we turn to the temple renovation narrative (15.380-425) we are similarly alerted to the literary value of the material. In fact, here we are told explicitly that the passage is “remarkable from a narratological point of view,” and that the account “displays a complex technique here, moving from the center to the periphery, and vice-versa” (285, n.2678). The viewpoint shifts from panoramic to zoom (286, n.2678; 297, n.2787), and from angle to angle (300, n.2811; 305, n.2862). But if the complex technique of this remarkable passage serves any particular narratological purpose, van Henten doesn't yet say. Even so, here too, readers of this section will find a mine of information (see, e.g., the extended note on the temple’s golden vine mentioned in Ant. 15.395: 299-300, n.2804).

It may be unfair to evaluate this work on its own, for we do know that much more is on its way. But in the hopes that feedback on this volume could prove helpful while the remaining fascicles are in preparation, I offer the following observations.

There are some disconnects between the front matter and the body of the work. While the maps (of Judea and Caesarea) are reasonably helpful, the