At the outset it should be noted that this published work is a revised edition of the author’s UCLA Ph.D. dissertation that was approved in 2003. As such, it represents the first detailed investigation of the translation of the Hebrew verbs in Chronicles into Greek, and this is considered in the context of two different developments. The first of these is the nature of the Hebrew verbal system, while the second considers the trend toward a more literal translation of the Bible. The translation that has been provided by the Septuagint thus provides a view of the Hebrew verbal system in the Hellenistic period (ca. 150 B.C.E.), which may be considered to be vital evidence of the continuous development of the verbal system from Classical Biblical Hebrew to Mishnaic Hebrew. It is the view of the author that this translation also testifies to the trend in the process of the translation of the Bible from the freer (but still literal) translation of the Pentateuch and Samuel–Kings to the slavishly literal rendering of Aquila.

It is convenient to note how this work has been divided. The work is broken up into six chapters, the titles of which are as follows: (1) “Introduction”; (2) “The Translators, Their Task and Achievement”; (3) “The Hebrew and Greek Verb Systems”; (4) “The Translation of Hebrew Verbs in Chronicles”; (5) “The Rationale for Greek Verb Forms”; and (6) “Conclusion.” The first, introductory chapter also gives as subsections, “The Plan of This Study”; “Previous Studies”; and “This Study Compared with Previous Studies.” Of these,
it should be noted that the first is particularly helpful in a detailed work of this nature; perhaps the authors of future works of this nature could learn from this example.

As already noted, the first chapter contains two sections that deal with previous works that have concentrated in this area of research. In the first of these sections the works referred to are those by such scholars as Beck, Sailhamer, Busto Saiz, Zuber, Gentry, Schehr, and Sang-Hyuk Woo. While it can be judged that all of these are recent contributions, it is the case that previous works such as that by Arno Kropat would appear to have been passed over, and I could find only one reference to his work in the index.

In the second chapter Good deals with the Septuagint translators in general, as well as their background and, further, how their background influenced them in the carrying out of their task. This particular topic is covered in §1 of chapter 2, which considers such topics as “The Alexandrian Jewish Community—Its Language and Culture”; “The Reason(s) for the Translation”; “The Translators”; and “The Place and Time of Translation.” The subjects treated in this section are of course of the utmost importance, and it is to Good’s credit that he has provided these subjects as a backdrop to the translators’ work. It is unfortunate that we know so little of who the translators were or how proficient they were in rendering the Hebrew language. Such judgments can only come from a detailed study of the texts they have left us to study, and it is such a consideration that Good has sought to provide us.

In chapter 3 Good gets down to the heart of the matter by a consideration of the two verbal systems. This chapter considers the inventory of the verb forms as they occur in both Hebrew and Greek as well as how scholars have understood their functions and method of operation. In particular, this chapter also mentions how the verb forms operate in three different clause or text types: narrative main clauses, reported speech main clauses, and subordinate clauses. It should be noted, however, that this latter category of text types is covered more fully in chapters 4 and 5. This chapter also introduces the concepts of tense, aspect, Aktionsart, sentence topic and focus, discourse contexts, and clause types and seeks to indicate how such concepts might influence the translator’s verb choice.

As far as the translator’s verb choice is concerned, Good is of the opinion that the translator has used a common equivalent for each Hebrew form and that such choice was based upon his understanding of the current Hebrew spoken at the time of translation. Thus he translated qatal forms with aorists (simple past), qotel forms with presents (in reported speech and subordinate clauses), yiqtol forms with futures, and periphrastic forms with periphrastic forms. Based upon the traditional understanding of archaic
forms, he translated יִהְיֶה with καὶ ἐγένετο, yiqtol duratives with imperfects and preterites with aorists, and consecutive wayyiqtol and weqatal forms with καὶ + aorists and καὶ + futures, respectively. From the foregoing list it can be seen that Good has investigated his topic in great detail, which is, of course, to the reader’s advantage.

The detail Good has provided increases in chapter 4, which deals with the translation of Hebrew verbs in Chronicles. This detail considers a great number of examples that are illustrated by means of tables. The detail that Good has provided is impossible to cover in a brief review such as this is. However, what can be said is that this chapter looks at how each Hebrew indicative form, participle, and infinitive was translated into Greek. In doing so it briefly considers what the rationale might have been for each translation equivalent. In making this analysis, Good is of the view that the resultant translation differs in verb use from the Greek texts contemporary with the translation mostly in the relative frequency of certain verb forms and structures. Accordingly, he comes to the conclusion that Greek forms and structures that occur more frequently in translation include aorist forms and structures such as καὶ ἐγένετο, paratactic clauses, and noun clauses. It is his view that these occur because they are common equivalents or a result of closely following the Hebrew syntax due to the philosophy of translation. By contrast, other forms and structures that occur less frequently are imperfects, perfects, pluperfects, and historic presents, circumstantial participles, and hypotactic clauses.

In chapter 5 Good considers all the Greek indicative verb forms and participles, looks at how they function in three clause types, and considers the rationale for their use by the translator according to the contextual gauges, to which he has already drawn attention in the course of his work. In chapter 6 he deals with the translation as a whole and considers how the translator understood the Hebrew verbal system according to his historical linguistic context, textual linguistic context, and cultural context.

Due to the amount of detail that Good has considered in the course of his work, this is bound to become the most up-to-date work on this subject in print. Apart from the exegetical deductions one can make from the translator’s work, there is also the consideration of the working of the Hebrew verbal system, to which the text of the Septuagint of Chronicles can give us insight. Accordingly, one must conclude that this study is one that throws light on areas that are constantly in the mind of the eager biblical researcher. Good has provided his work with the three useful indices: biblical citations, (mostly Chronicles), subjects, and authors.