Perhaps I must recommend the reader to study this book backwards. The final part (part VII) is probably most interesting for those who for the first time bury themselves in the literary and theological problems which so abundantly occur in the book of Job. However, the conclusions of that final part are firmly based on the previous, rhetorical analyses. I hope to have excited enough interest at the end of the book so that some readers will also take up the study of the structures of the individual poems. Again, I recommend these persevering readers to study these sections backwards, that is to say, in the first place to take notice of the 'comments and summary' (analyses x.6). These 'comments' try to lead the way through the bare catalogues of the preceding analyses (x.3–5). To see the whole problem of rhetorical structures in the book of Job (and of Hebrew poetry in general) in the right perspective one must pay attention to the first part of this study. Maybe some readers will get down to these historical explanations.

I am deeply indebted to Ms N.Chr. Wielenga (Dokkum) for her help in translating this book and her valuable suggestions for improving its style. I also wish to thank dr. J.P. Fokkelman (Leiden) for his warm interest in the progression of this study and for his critical remarks as to my methodological approach and many structural elements which characterize the analyses of the poems.¹ Without the patience and understanding of my wife Gerry there would have been no pleasure at all in writing this book. Moreover, she was actively involved when large parts of the typescript had to be put into the computer.

Thanks are also due to prof. dr. J.C. de Moor (Kampen) and the Theological University of Kampen (the Netherlands) for setting up excellent, external conditions in which the final stage of this study could be carried through.

¹References to Fokkelman in parenthesis concern these private communications.