Summary

The aim of this book has been, to study the interaction between prosodic structure and syntactic structure in Biblical Hebrew poetry, in the hope that this will yield a more complete view of what 'goes on' in these texts.

For practical reasons, the study had to be narrowed down to the syntactic side of the issue, and had as its central research question, to what extent, and in what way, a (text-)syntactic analysis of Biblical Hebrew poetry should take note of prosodic influence on the (text-)syntax, in order to do justice to the linguistic reality in these texts.

Positioning in the field of research  Part I surveyed representatives of both literary and syntactic approaches. It became apparent, that especially 'strong-rulled' literary approaches (positing formal and strict rules for delimiting cola) offer possibilities for interaction with syntactic research.

It also transpired that the two approaches tend to concentrate on their own domains. In itself, this is sensible, since the prosodic and syntactic structures essentially form two separate systems. Ideally, each system should be studied on its own terms, after which the interaction of the two can be studied.

However, in practice the two systems influence each other to the degree that neither a strictly prosodic analysis, without any recourse to syntax, nor a strictly syntactic analysis, without any attention for prosody, can do full justice to the texts.

(text-)syntactic research  In Part II, this mutual influence was studied on the syntactic side, noting prosodic phenomena which influence syntactic structures. To this end, the author made a text-syntactic clause hierarchy of Lamentations, using the standard ETCBC tools but with special attention to prosodic influence. This hierarchy was then studied, both by the author, accounting for his decisions by annotating the hierarchy, and by an experimental set of programs. The process was iterative, in that the formal descriptions and the annotations could (and did) repeatedly give rise to new insights and adjustment of the clause hierarchy, which would then be described and annotated anew, etc. From this research, the following observations resulted:
The boundaries of colon, verseline and strophe have a notable influence on short-range clause connections. Often, the prosodic boundaries group clauses differently than their syntax would suggest.

An acrostic can occasionally cause syntactically unexplained word order variations. Especially the text-syntactic behavior of acrostic clauses in 1-strophe is strongly affected.

Participant references form structures of their own, which often converge with syntactic ones, but not always.

Purely prosodic word order variation in the B-colon is rare in Lamentations, but can be demonstrated.

Qatal-yiqtol shift as purely prosodic variation is also rare, but a few possible cases can be found.

Some cases of precative qatal were recognized; strict formal conditions for this recognition were proposed.

Proposal for an approach  In Part III adjustments to the syntactic procedures were proposed, in line with the observations in Part II:

- Include prosodic units into the procedure: at least colon, verseline and strophe.

- Design separate sets of arguments and descriptions for syntax, prosody and participant domains, so that their interaction can be studied more precisely.

- Develop procedures to expand the available arguments for syntactic analysis with prosodic information and information from participant references.

The descriptional tools used in the research formed a pilot project for implementing these proposals.

Comprehensive analysis  In a final chapter, a tentative example was given of the potential of a comprehensive prosodic / syntactic study. The discourse of Lam 3 was demonstrated to be carried by the interaction between syntactic and prosodic structure.

Pilot project  In the appendix, the computer implementation of the proposed approach was presented in more detail. The implementation needs more development, but it has potential for greatly expanding linguistic observations, both syntactically and prosodically.