Preface

In 1971 I wrote the two required qualifying papers for Ph.D. dissertation work in linguistics. One was about "small clauses"—the notion that clause structure has several layers, that syntactic operations are associated with particular layers, and that each layer can be embedded directly, without the mediation of the higher layers. The other proposed that tones in tonal languages compose structures that are independent of segmental or syllabic structure and that a certain kind of mapping holds between the tonal and segmental representations. I guess these were the two best ideas I've ever had. After thirty years of trying to bring something better to light, I have given up and have determined instead that my further contribution will be to combine them—if not into one idea, then at least into one model of the linguistic system. That is what I try to do in this book. The two ideas take the following guise: (1) syntactic economy is actually shape conservation (here I return to the idea from tonal systems that grammar involves not one complex representation, but two simple ones put into a simple relation to one another), and (2) different clausal types can be embedded at different levels (the Level Embedding Conjecture an implementation of the "small clause" idea).

In fact, though, when I put those two ideas together, a third popped out that isn't inherent in either. It's this third idea that is responsible for the sharpest new predictions in the book: the generalization of the A/\overline{A} system to $A/\overline{A}/\overline{A}/\overline{A}$..., which may be viewed as an n-ary generalization of the binary structure of the NP Structure model proposed in Van Riemsdijk and Williams 1981. So this book also brings forward a strand of my collaboration with longtime friend Henk van Riemsdijk.

Most of the ideas in this book have been presented in series of four to five lectures or in one-week summer school courses: in Lesbos (1999), Plovdiv (1999), and Vienna (1996–2001), and at UCLA (1997), Univer-

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sity of British Columbia (1998), LOT (2001), and University College London (2002). Other parts were presented in multiple meetings of the Dutch/Hungarian verb movement study group in Wasenaar, Pecs, Budapest, and Otteveny, in the years 1997–2001. I have benefited particularly from the extended contact with an audience that such series afford.

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