

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am ever so grateful to a number of people. Quite a few actually. Some of who were vital for this research, others who are vital for me and yet again, others who fit in both categories.

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Anneke, my room mate, the times we both were there, the room was filled with chat, and I am not likely to forget the many kilometres we walked on the streets of Boston, that was fun!

The rest of the colleagues at the “group with a multitude of names, choose the one that fits the occasion”, I kind of like the name Oral physiology group, so that’s what I’ll call you. Thanks a lot for helping me put all small bits and pieces together, and for the “gezelligheid” during the coffee and lunch breaks. The topics were very wide and always interesting, ranging from cookies and the occasional work-related topic to meta-physics. At times of sky-rising political parties, assassinations and fallen cabinets, which happened significantly more often during the past 4 years, the politics got a fair amount of prime time as well. This year, there will be a whole succession of people finishing their PhD-research in our group, Natasja, soon you’ll have all the privileges of a PhD-student for yourself, enjoy it, gogogogo!

I also want to thank to the whole (ex) B-008 team for doing all that exciting research and for the fun we had when doing it. I learned a lot from you, about science as well as people interaction.

Thanks to the ever so friendly Franklin Zoet, for showing me how to use the Coulter counter, for doing quite some size measurements and taking many nice photographs of particles.

Thanks to WCFS for giving me the opportunity to do this PhD research.

This research wouldn’t have been all that exciting without the intense actions of the participants’ oral receptors, thank you all for standing all those litres of custard and mayonnaise that you ingested.

I’m very grateful and would like to thank you all. I sincerely hope I haven’t left anyone out, and if I have, I’m really sorry.

Travel – that’s a red thread through my existence, whether it’s treading the winding paths of science, the daily train journey to work, monthly trip to Holland while living in England,

regular family visit or the (at least) yearly vacation to an exciting place. Despite my efforts, I can't seem to keep up with my "places-I-want-to-see" list. Most of the time I love travelling; seeing new places, trying different food and meeting new people. This all, just as my life, begun with my parents.

Dearest Mum and Dad, you both are always very happy with my achievements and never doubt my capabilities or, if you do, you successfully keep it to yourselves. I want to thank you for being you (full of character and with lots of good qualities) and bringing me up to being who I am. After having gone separate ways, you both have found very good new partners, making the family bigger – the more – the merrier (the almost teenaged Avila and Boris fit well into that category).

Next in line is my sister, Maria, who taught me a number of very important things: 1. She taught me to read and write long before I was due for school. 2. She also made clear that I was and would remain the little sister, which I enjoy immensely more now than at the age of five. 3. Perhaps most versatile of all; the "cocktail smile" and how to be a good hostess (she is the best ever). In addition to that (yes, there is more) she has brightened up all our lives by giving birth to the absolutely lovely girls, Emelie and Amanda, and marrying a friendly and funny man.

Mijn lieve schoonouders, Henk en Riet, ik wil jullie bedanken voor de altijd even hartverwarmende belangstelling, interesse, hulp en het meedenken.

Dear friends and family, I enjoy the time with all of you a lot, you are great and you really inspire me!! Thanks for all your visits to us in England, they were super! Please know that you are always welcome!

I like saving the best things for last: such as the dessert to complete a delicious meal. That's why I end by saying thanks to my beloved Peter for everything. Everything is quite a lot, but it's true - where should I start? Thanks for all the support, both practical and emotional; for taking me and joining me to many exciting places (at writing, you are in Iran and I am soon to follow); for your complete belief in me, even at times when I was doubting; for your warm, energising hugs; for your wonderful love and for being such a terrific person.

Thank you all, you make my life a stimulating journey!

Lina