Thanks

In 1994 I spent six months as an Endoscopy Fellow at the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam, where I experienced for the first time the hospitality of the Dutch people. I made many good friends then, and it has been a pleasure since to renew old acquaintances and make new ones as my interest in coeliac disease has brought me back to the Netherlands on numerous occasions. It is a particular honour to submit this thesis to the country of the late Dr Willem K Dicke, whose seminal work defined, and continues to provide a reference point for, our understanding of coeliac disease in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Special thanks are due to:

My promotor:

Prof. Dr. GNJ Tytgat: My acquaintance with him dates from my very profitable time at the Academic Medical Center, Amsterdam. My thanks are due to him for his encouragement and support in my submission of this thesis.

My co-promotor:

Dr Chris Mulder: again for his encouragement and support, and whose enthusiasm for the subject of coeliac disease has been an inspiration. His data on the subject of seronegative coeliac disease in particular have reinforced the significance of my own. His personal support in the international community of coeliac researchers and in the production of this thesis has been invaluable.

My fellow researchers:

Dr Stanley McMillan, clinical chemist: without whom the serological aspects of these studies would have been impossible. We have been in collaboration now for over ten years and his enthusiasm has yet to wane.
Dr Dermot Hughes, histopathologist, who interpreted the duodenal histology and who has tolerated with good grace, and despite a heavy routine clinical workload, the submission of huge numbers of duodenal fragments.

My patients with coeliac disease: now numbering over 200, without whom these studies would have been impossible, and whom I hope benefited and will continue to benefit from the lessons learned.

I also need to mention:

Ms Mienke Kooistra, secretary at the Academic Medical Center, who led me carefully through the PhD regulations of the University of Amsterdam, and who has provided expert guidance in the putting together of this thesis.

And last but not least:

Lucinda, for her unfailing good humour and unflagging support during the preparation of this thesis;

My parents, who provided me with the enthusiasm to pursue a career in medicine.