Preface

To many people, air transport resembles the world of Peter Stuyvesant: glamorous, adventurous and tinged with danger. Even if environmental damage and a number of accidents have somewhat changed that image, air transport still has a trace of the spectacular. The image confirms the idea that ‘the pleasure of travelling is in the journey.’

Travelling inside, as you do when writing a doctoral thesis, indeed generates pleasure but also pain: the ‘pain’ of tracking down information, clarifying key questions, developing a model, refining knowledge of fundamental economics, working hours on end, rethinking, rewriting, checking, editing...and, finally, seeing light at the end of the tunnel but not seeing it come closer. Even worse, being in the light for a short while, only to discover that there is another tunnel ahead. When I began this thesis more than five years ago, I could never have imagined what lay ahead of me.

Why would anybody in their right minds embark on a thesis, you may ask? Well, because there is also pleasure ahead. Finding that pleasure requires a strong interest in the subject of investigation. Speaking for myself, this was certainly the case, with a job at Schiphol at the time and a father who had worked there since I was two years old. To my first memories belong walking with my dad in the Amsterdam woods and finishing our walk drinking a cup of cocoa at parking lot P3. Who would have thought then.....?

Writing a thesis gives pleasure when assumptions are confirmed, new thoughts spring to mind, the scope for improvement becomes clear, or a line of reasoning appears sound: the ‘aha erlebnis’. The journey has taken me more than five years. It has both cost me and given me a lot. Now that the journey has ended, I’m glad that it’s over.

There are many people who have in one way or another helped me to continue my trip. I am indebted to my supervisors, Professor Heertje and Professor Polak, for providing me with the inspiration needed to conduct research. They were able to extract the best from me through a unique combination of knowledge, character and incentives. I also wish to mention Professor Wassenbergh, the well-known professor of air law at Leyden University, who showed me and my fellow students some years ago how challenging a course in air law could be. And how you should not proceed from ‘what is’ but be willing to turn your mind to ‘what can be’! The term ‘lege ferenda’ should sound familiar to all those who have had the opportunity to attend his classes. Thanks are due to my ‘paranimfen’ - Jacques, who read a lot about what his job implied but didn’t fail to act upon it, and René, who was busy developing his business but always found time to give advice on a whole range of matters - and both their wives, Dady and long-time friend Sandra. Jan-Willem, explained a lot to me about the publishing business and was always willing to talk about it over dinner somewhere.

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Family, friends and colleagues, especially my former employer, Schiphol Group, did not always understand what I was doing (and why I didn’t do all the things a young woman is supposed to do), but sometimes provided great insight into my motives for writing a thesis. Their opinions helped me grow during my research.

I certainly need to mention Ivette at this point, who was able with bottomless energy and insurmountable logic to point out the not so logical parts of both my English and my reasoning. Often, the solution to our discussion was to delete a sentence. We became masters at leaving things out, notwithstanding that the book has still reached more than 200 pages! Although it may have seemed as if I did not like our discussions, this may have been due more to frustration on my side than anything else. Again, I learnt a lot.

Last but not least, I am greatly indebted to Jan, who facilitated and supported the journey in many ways. Words fail me here. It’s good to know that we have some real travel ahead of us.

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