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Worlds on a string: on beads and exchange in Merovingian Northern Gaul

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Worlds on a String

On Beads and Exchange in Merovingian Northern Gaul

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van

de graad van doctor

aan de Universiteit Leiden

op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. dr. S. de Rijcke,

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door

Margareth Babette Langbroek

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THE PRICE OF ANYTHING IS THE AMOUNT OF LIFE YOU EXCHANGE FOR IT.

- HENRY DAVID THOREAU

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‘IN PSYCHOLOGY, GRIT IS A POSITIVE, NON-COGNITIVE TRAIT BASED ON A PERSON’S PERSEVERANCE OF EFFORT
COMBINED WITH THEIR PASSION FOR A PARTICULAR LONG-TERM GOAL OR END STATE.’
- WIKIPEDIA, THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA

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If you ask me, completing a dissertation is mostly about grit: If you do not commit, it will never get done. Truly, there always seems to be something better, more urgent to do with your time, not to mention the complete shift in priorities that comes with becoming a mother. Still, here we (*finally*) are, after nine years which included two moves, a wedding, a pandemic, two kids, starting a small business in archaeology and finally joining Maurice Janssen and Lieke van Diepen at SAGA Archeologie. So, and perhaps unusually, I would like to start with taking my hat off to myself for actually seeing it through till the end.

A professor once told me that if I was not utterly and completely sick of my dissertation’s subject towards the end of writing it, I was not doing it right. I must say that, even though I understand the sentiment, I heartily disagree with this statement. If writing a dissertation becomes an ordeal and clears out the joy of your research, you are clearly doing it the *wrong* way. I feel very lucky that even after a decade of studying early medieval beads I gain new insights with every new bead set I get to study. The more I learn the more interesting studying the past through beads becomes, the more so because I have ended up with more questions than I started out with. In my view, that is what progress in research is all about: it is not so much about finding answers to the questions you start with than about learning to ask new and better questions.

Fundamentally, I think doing a PhD is something you do *for* yourself, and *to* others. This means both the people that are closest to me, and the researchers I have cooperated with. I thank you all *so much* for making the research in this dissertation possible. The first people that come to mind are of course my fellow ERC Rural Riches colleagues: Femke Lippok, Jip Barreveld, Dr. Martine van Haperen, Dr. Line van Wersch, Roeland Emaus, David Schaper and Prof. Dr. Frans Theuws. We were supported by an amazing team of (student) assistants, of whom I would like to mention Robin van Splunder, Sophie Vullings and Marieke van Winkelhoff especially. Thank you for all your skills, knowledge and ideas, thank and you for the lively discussions and excursions. Thank you for your enthusiasm, for your friendship, thank you for all your guidance and feedback. Thank you for the amazing database on early medieval archaeology that we have built together and thank you for all the future plans we have yet to carry out.

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