

About the author

I was born in 1978 in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) to Jeanne Overzier-Koppers and Harry Overzier. After attending the Erasmiaans Gymnasium, I decided to study Astronomy ("Sterrenkunde") at the University of Leiden in order to pursue further one of my biggest childhood fascinations. Despite some transitional difficulties in the beginning, I nonetheless managed to obtain my "propedeuse" at the end of the first year. My interest for research started through my first undergraduate research project ("klein sterrenkundig onderzoek") with Dr. Huub Röttgering. We analysed spectroscopic observations of a distant radio galaxy obtained with the Very Large Telescope in Chile. Our results lead to my first scientific publication, and I presented the results at a conference on Isla Mujeres (Mexico), supported by a travel grant from the Leids Universitair Fonds (LUF). For my graduate research project ("groot sterrenkundig onderzoek"), under the supervision of Dr. Huub Röttgering and Dr. Roeland Rengelink, I studied the large-scale, cosmological structure as probed by extragalactic radio sources. By studying the statistical distribution of hundreds of thousands of radio sources in the sky, we were able to study their gravitational clustering to unprecedented detail. I obtained my Master degree in November 2001.

In January 2002, I started as a Ph.D. student ("promovendus") working with Prof. George Miley on the study of galaxies in the environments of distant radio galaxies. I made two observing visits to the Very Large Telescope (Chile), and spent the month May both in 2002 and 2003 at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge (United States) working with Dr. Daniel Harris on the analysis of X-ray observations of distant radio galaxies obtained with the Chandra satellite. The main part of my Ph.D. project was based on observations by the Science Team of the Advanced Camera for Surveys (ACS) on the Hubble Space Telescope (HST). This superb camera was installed during an upgrade of the HST by astronauts of the space shuttle Columbia's 27th flight (STS-109) in March 2002. The results of these research projects are presented in the current thesis, parts of which have also appeared as separate publications in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, *The Astrophysical Journal*, and *Nature*.

During my Ph.D. I spent one and a half years working with the ACS Science Team in Baltimore (United States). I further participated in the 21st winterschool on galaxy formation in Jerusalem (Israel) and in meetings, conferences or workshops in London and Edinburgh (United Kingdom), College Park and Aspen (United States), Poelgeest and Dwingeloo (The Netherlands), Granada (Spain), and Heidelberg (Germany).

At Leiden Observatory ("Sterrewacht Leiden") I was a teaching assistant for the course Galaxies ("Sterrenstelsels") given by Dr. Jan Lub and Prof. Marijn Franx. I was a member of the Social committee, the Public Outreach committee, and the Annual Report committee.

In September 2006, I will continue my research in astronomy through a joint postdoctoral fellowship at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore (USA) and the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics in Garching (Germany).

Acknowledgments

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