Acknowledgments
Acknowledgments

The bridge, the so-called De Brug between two important buildings at the University Medical Center in Groningen always reminded me of an intercellular bridge seen in the epidermis that we have extensively studied in our work. Who knows how many times during the last four years I have passed that bridge that connects two different departments, the Department of Dermatology and the Department of Cell Biology. I had the opportunity to closely watch and learn from dermatology and cell biology researchers, to apply their laboratory techniques and to enjoy our meetings and presentations, as well as our lab days and borrels. During this period of time, many people helped me to develop and find my way in the scientific world in a foreign country. To all of them I am highly indebted.

This scientific and personal trajectory would not be possible without my promotor Prof. dr. Marcel Jonkman and my co-promotors Dr. Hendri Pas and Dr. Ben Giepmans, to whom I express my deepest gratitude equally.

Dear Prof. dr. Marcel Jonkman, I was honored to be a part of your research group and thank you for giving me this opportunity. I enjoyed your enthusiasm about research, your presentations and your work ethics. I highly appreciate your scientific input and continuous support for my PhD study, your motivation and knowledge. I am deeply thankful for helping me with my future plans and for giving me the opportunity to work in a clinical trial.

Dear Hendri, I am grateful for your generous support and guidance during all these four years. You have introduced me to the theories of pemphigus pathogenesis and the world of spikes, clusters, autoantibodies and interdigitations. I appreciate your enthusiasm towards this topic which guided me and motivated me to do more. I am much obligated to you for your contribution in writing and finalizing this PhD book, as well as for your insightful comments and encouragement.

Dear Ben, I was honored to be part of your research group. You have introduced me to the world of imaging and fluorescent proteins. Thank you for believing in me although you knew I had no previous lab experience and for allowing me to use all the fancy microscopes, techniques and guns. I will always treasure my knowledge acquired from you. Without your precious support it would not be possible to conduct this research.

My sincere gratitude to the members of the reading committee, Prof. dr. Peters, Prof. dr. Ludwig and Prof. dr. Heeringa for the prompt reviewing of this thesis.

I am also much obliged to the collaborators, Dr. Michael Davidson who enriched this work with fluorescently tagged proteins and to Dr. Akemi Ishida-Yamamoto for contributions in electron microscopy.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof.dr. Han Moshage who was the key person before my arrival to Groningen and to Prof.dr. Dick Hoekstra for his scientific input.
Acknowledgments

Two important people, Duco Kramer and Miranda Nijenhuis did enormous work for this thesis and I own much to them. I was really lucky to have such skilled researchers by my side.

Dear Duco, thank you for all the time and energy you spent on this work, for your cooperation, for all the EM sections, all the try outs for the CLEM experiment and above all for your patience. It was my pleasure to work with you.

Dear Miranda, thank you for teaching me how to work with keratinocytes and the skin model, your understanding and all the cell experiments that you have done.

I was very lucky to have two wonderful colleagues working on the same topic, who became my good friends and my paranymphs: Angelique Poot and Laura de Sena. I really enjoyed our pemphigus talks and journal clubs. Our friendship developed quicker than our understanding of pemphigus. Angelique, I am grateful for the Dutch summary of this thesis and Laura, thank you for your hugs.

I would like to thank Andrea Garcia, Júlia Saldanha, Sjoerd de Haan and Gisela Otten for joining my work with their internships. Andrea and Júlia, your ideas and enthusiasm enriched this research topic and Gisela’s thesis contributed to the chapter of this book.

I express my acknowledgments to all the members of the Giepmans group, firstly Jeroen Kuipers and Klaas Sjollema. Dear Jeroen, it is such a pleasure to have you in the lab, you always made me cheerful and happier and thank you for teaching me all the lab tricks. Dear Klaas, you have taught me how to work with the confocal microscopes, thank you for the time and patience. A special note to Ulrike Schnell and Nynke Oosterhof for being my office roommates for a certain time. All the present and former members of Giepmans lab contributed with their help, questions and ideas: Anouk Wolters, Ruby Kalicharan, Freark Dijk, Anneke Veenstra-Algra, Han van der Want, Tjakko van Ham, Pascal de Boer, Marit de Beer, Fiona van den Heuvel.

I would like to thank the present and former members of the Dermatology group. Dear Marjon Pasmooij and Iana Turcan you are lovely friends. Dear Gilles Diercks, thank you for your scientific contribution. Dear Gerda van der Wier, thank you for your input in understanding pemphigus pathogenesis. Dear Mira Oktarina, I have never met you, but your thesis was my main guide book all these years. Dear Jeroen Bremer, thank you for all the laughs. Antoni, Kasia, Wianda, Janine, Wing-Yan, Joost, Laura Pot it was very nice to have you as colleagues. Connie, Janny and Laura, thank you for your help in the dermatology lab. Dear Tanja Vogel, I enjoyed our collaborations with skin experiments. I want to express my gratitude also to Dr. Barbara Horvath and José Duipmans.
Acknowledgments

The surgeons at the Department of Plastic Surgery collaborated with us in receiving skin for our research experiments. I also express my gratitude to all the patients who provided research material for this work.

I own much to the secretaries of the Cell Biology and Dermatology: Greetje Noppert and Anneke Hoekstra, for their help with administration and paper work.

I appreciate the members of the research group of Dr. Fulvio Reggiori, who made my research environment livelier, with special thanks to my present office roommates Nienke and Andrí. Besides, I would like to express my gratitude to all the PIs and researchers of the rest of the Cell Biology department for their input during the meeting presentations of the Department of Cell Biology.

I was happy to be part of the Department of Cell biology party committee and to organize social events together with: Despina, Cuifeng, Wondwossen and Djoke. We were a good team full of ideas.

Being part of the GSMS PhD Development Conference 2015 organization committee together with Heleen, Nicole, Charlotte, Stefan, Dario, Mirjan and Tushar was a nice and exciting experience that gave me additional organizational skills. Thank you for the teamwork and for the great conference.

An important part during my stay in Holland had the salsa scene in Groningen. I would like to thank Salsa Juan Carlos and all the amazing people I met there for all the music, steps and performances, which brought me happiness and friendship.

Being away from my home country brings both joy and difficulties. The joyful side are the diverse people that made my life in Groningen colorful and exciting. I am thankful to all of you.

Dear Marija, thank you for being there for me, for your generosity and all the fun. I am so happy that we stayed good friends. Ilche, you are a very nice person and I am grateful for the talks, P.S. coffee moments and laughs.

Adisa, your Bosnian humor always cheered me up and made me laugh. Faris, thank you for your support and having “good Bosnian bad-time” conversations. PhD grants that we have received more than four years ago completely changed our lifes.

Violeta, you were a nice roommate for a certain time during my PhD and we had great parties. Maja and Catherine, you were kind and warm roommates too.

Dear Sergei, I appreciate our connection and thank you for the funny moments. I am very grateful for your support, especially for your help with Dutch language and the medical nostrification exams.
Acknowledgments

Anna, you are a lovely person and I was honored to be your paranymph. Dear Madina, thank you for being kind and supportive. Ghazaleh, I am grateful for your friendship and understanding. Jelena Stefanović, I was happy to have nice talks with you.

Nato, I enjoyed our conversations. Funda and Turhan thank you for your Turkish spirit. Karin, I enjoyed our dancing moments together. Mina Netkova, thank you for your help and Alina, for the photographs. Mina Tayari, I enjoyed our dinners.

I am grateful to all of my relatives living abroad and in my home land. A special note to my wonderful aunt Besima for her support.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the most important people in my life, my twin sister Anida and my parents Zerina and Mirza.

The best thing in the whole world is to have a twin sister. Life is more fun when you come in a pair. Dear Anida, thank for thinking the way I think and for being my mirror reflection, my advisor and my guard. You are the best travel companion, in life and during our trips.

Draga mama i tata, hvala vam na vašoj iskrenoj i bezuslovnoj pomoći, podršci, razumijevanju i beskrajnoj ljubavi. Bez vas ne bih ovo postigla. Vi ste sve učinili za mene i ja sam najštetrnija što imam vas. Ovaj rad je posvećen vama.

I hope that De Brug will keep connecting the Department of Cell Biology and the Department of Dermatology, joining their research capacities towards new discoveries.

Ena Sokol
November 2015