Acknowledgement
Acknowledgement

Finishing my PhD was like climbing a very high peak, there were many ups and downs, falls and setbacks, hard work, getting lost, backtracking, discovering new paths, frustrations, finding new motivation to keep going, encouragement, trust and support. When I found myself on top, I realised that doing a PhD was the most challenging yet rewarding adventure I have ever been on. Even though only my name will be on the front cover, finishing would have not been possible without all the supportive, talented and inspiring people around me. I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to everyone who contributed to this thesis in their own way.

First, I would like to thank my mentor Arnold who let me join his lab as a Master’s student and later as a PhD student. This work would have not been possible without your supervision and involvement, your support and encouragement from project start until the defense date. Under your guidance I overcame many obstacles and learnt a lot. Thank you for providing a place for me to grow scientifically and personally, the freedom I had in my projects and the encouraging words before my defense.

I also would like to thank my Co-Promoter Dirk-Jan for his helpful comments, suggestions and constructive criticism throughout this entire project. This thesis has benefitted from your insightful recommendations.

I was able to make most out of my last year of PhD in terms of manuscripts and successful projects, because of my mentor Alexej. I’m incredibly grateful for all your support, experimental help, all the time you invested to proof read as well as your patience, positive attitude and encouragement, when I was close to giving up. Your mentorship and guidance were absolutely invaluable to finish. Thank you so much for everything!

A very special thank you goes to my parynmphs László and Riccardo. I couldn’t be happier, to have the two of you as my friends and colleagues standing beside me and supporting me throughout my defense. I am deeply grateful for all the fun and randomly wonderful moments you brought into my life, all lunch breaks, BBQs, movie nights, concerts, festivals and holidays together. Your honesty, support and cheer-ups helped me to keep going whenever I had the feeling, I would not be able to finish this thesis. Thank
you for always being there for me and for helping me to put things back into perspective, when I lost track. Thank you for your friendship!

**Antoine**, this thesis has truly benefitted from your constructive feedback and helpful comments. Thank you for your enthusiasm and positive attitude during meetings. Our collaborators **Cesar** and **Siwert-Jan**, thank you for your co-operation, support and fruitful discussions. **Cesar**, thanks for providing the picture for the front cover of this book. **Anne-Bart**, I am really grateful that you shared your knowledge about microscopy with me and analysed all the data for the single-molecule project.

I also would like to thank my dear friends **Tonia** and **Ina**. You have always been understanding, were there for me in good and bad times, listed to every complaint and helped finding solutions. Thank you for creating an atmosphere where we could share whatever we had on our minds. Saying good-bye has been difficult, but I will always treasure wonderful memories of our trips to Ireland and Scheveningen, going for sports together, all the dinners, random nights out and get-togethers. “Ermahgerd”-jokes never get boring with you. You taught me the most crucial lesson of my PhD, how important friendship and support truly is.

Dear **Ilínika**, **Carina** and **Lucky**, I am deeply grateful that you created a home away from home! Thank you for the laughter, study times on the balcony, numerous late-night talks, cooking together and many more unforgettable memories. I am deeply grateful that you made the effort to stay in touch like noting happened. Your friendship truly enriched my life.

It’s always challenging to move to a new place, however **Ina**, **Reto**, **Tonia**, **László**, **Riccardo**, **Zsófi**, **Marten**, **André**, **Steph**, **Niels**, **Paula**, **Annarita**, **Carsten**, **Anna** and **Ciska** were like a second family to me. Thank you for sharing this journey. **André** and **Steph**, I am really grateful that you always made me feel welcome at your place and shared your wisdom about multi cookers as well as advice concerning my PhD or mostly life in general. Thank you for all the dog pictures, **Steph. Marten**, it was a wonderful experience to not only be friends, but also collaborate together. I really appreciate your encouragements over the last few years, your patience when teaching me how to play a F-chord and that you practiced with me how to pitch a tent in the Noorderplantsoen before I went camping. **Niels**, thank you for being
such a great bench partner and all the interesting, yet sometimes random, conversations we had. **Reto**, I am really grateful that you were my first friend in Groningen, I will never forget all the fun times we have had and our trip to Schim-op-Scheul. **Zsófi**, because you inspired me, I started to do voluntary jobs, from which I took a lot of energy to finish my thesis and confidence to go for new opportunities. By always being so honest with me, you really helped me to develop myself as a scientist and as a person and I am deeply grateful for that. Thank you so much for all our chats and life advice, the office would have not been the same without you.

I also would like to thank the other members of the MolMic group. **Juke**, I really appreciated all the scientific input. **Janny**, thank you so much for all your advice concerning experimental set-ups, all your effort on my first project and keeping the lab going and organised. **Greetje**, I am really grateful for all your help with experiments and my Dutch summary. Because of your patience and help, I was able to improve my language skills. Bedankt! A special thank you goes to **Bea** and **Anmara**, for always helping me out with organisational arrangements, answering even the silliest questions, but also always having time to listen, when I needed it. **Bea**, I will never forget our trip to Dubrovnik and all the chats we had. Thank you for helping me with my Dutch summary and your encouraging words. **Amalina**, the lab would have never been the same without you. Thank you for always being so kind and for all the hugs. It was a pleasure to work with you. **Megha**, I am really grateful that you contributed to this thesis. It was great to work with you. **Jeanine**, thank you for being such a great mentor during my Master project. I learned a lot from you and this book would not exist without your amazing mentoring skills. Thanks to all the other MolMicans, past and present for their help and support during the last 4 years: **Jeroen**, **Ahsen**, **Min**, **Elke**, **Danae**, **Alexandra**, **Fabiola**, **Ilja**, **Intan**, **Irfan**, **Loes**, **Sasha**, **Stefan**, **Jan-Pieter**, **Eva** and **Ana**.

During the last years I really enjoyed contributing to the optimization of the PhD education as part of the PhD council. I would like to thank **Carmem**, **Christian**, **Frita**, **Ika**, **Daniel**, **Olivier**, **Marco**, **Monique**, **Peter**, **Vincent**, **Renate** and **Yvonne** for making this such an interesting and rewarding experience. It was a pleasure to work together for a great cause.
I also would like to thank my wonderful friends that I am so grateful to have in my life. Patricia and Jia-Shu, thanks for being the best and most encouraging yet crazy climbing partners and for always catching me when I fall! Linda, thanks for understanding me so well. I can always rely on you! Dear Janine, Hannes and Benni, thanks for creating the most fun and wonderful memories in Senftenberg. Studying would have never been the same without you! Tina, thanks for being my oldest friend and for all your support throughout the years.

Thomas, you had an incredible input on this journey. I would like to thank you for all the support and for believing in me when I lost trust in myself. I am deeply grateful for your unconditional love, all the adventures and that you always encourage me dream big. Seeing how much you believed in me, made me trust in my own strength and gave me the energy that I needed to finish this PhD. Thank you for being the light of my life and for showing me that I am yours too.

Liebe Mutti, lieber Vati, danke, dass ihr mir ein Zuhause voller Liebe, Wärme und Zuneigung geschenkt habt. Seit meiner Kindheit habt ihr mich darin bestärkt wissbegierig und mutig zu sein. Ihr wart mir Vorbilder und habt mich auf all meinen Wegen begleitet und permanent unterstützt. Danke für eure bedingungslose Liebe, dass ihr immer an mich geglaubt habt und stets für mich da wart sowie ein offenes Ohr hattet.
