ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
"El más certero resumen de una vida es el recuento preciso de las personas que hemos encontrado en el trayecto"  Héctor Abad Faciolince.

“The most accurate summary of a life is the precise recollection of the people we have encountered on its path”

If you have read my thesis, you probably realize how often I use the term interactions. I have learned a great deal about interactions in the past years, but not just of the molecular kind. I have learned about interactions with my supervisors, my colleagues, my friends and my family. All those interactions, and the ones in the past, have shaped the person I am now, and to all those people I have encountered on my path, I thank you for being part of my story and for helping me, one way or another, to conclude the hardest academic venture I have ever embarked on.

This journey would not have started without the trust profé Silvio placed in me. Thank you profé for giving me the opportunity to start my PhD in your group. Likewise, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Jolanda Smit. Thank you for the great freedom you have given me during all these years, for trusting in me to design my projects and conduct my experiments in an independent manner. Thank you for your critical input, for staying late to help me finish this thesis, and especially for keeping my spirit up in the moments nothing seemed to work.

I thank the members of my reading and tutorial committees for their valuable suggestions on this thesis. To Omar, I would like to extend my gratitude, not just for reading this thesis, but also my bachelor thesis. Your classes on cellular and molecular biology spurred me on to follow this path and I am very happy that you continue to be around during my development as a scientist. Jan, thank you for all your support at the beginning of my PhD; I am glad that you were also able to be part of the end of it. Profes Luis Fernando and Juan Carlos, thank you for the tough questions and critical suggestions. They helped me through the years to improve my research projects and the way I executed them.

Jolanda O., thank you for making things work! From the very beginning helping me to find a place to live until the end reviewing the Dutch summary of this thesis and making sure I stick to schedule, you have been the person I could always relay on.

Anke van den Berg, Joost Kluiver, Kathrin Thedieck, Alex Heberle and Geysson Fernandez, thank you for all your help and valuable suggestions. I hope we continue to collaborate in the future.

I have been in the lab for quite some time and it seems almost impossible to name all the colleagues I have worked with. I just know that I feel very lucky for having been part of a research group where it feels good to work, with a nice environment and super nice people. Thank you Iza, Toos and Anke for your insightful suggestions to
Acknowledgements

Thank you to my various projects. Thank you Jacqueline, Marijke, Annemarie, Baukje-Nynke and Heidi; because of you all the magic of science can happen. To all my PhD-mates, current and past, thank you for sharing the ups and downs of this experience. Thank you for enlightening me regarding your diverse cultures and traditions and for showing me how little the world is that we live in. Thank you Mareike (please come back with some cookies), Zoraida, Tabitha, Stephanie, Silvia, Mariana, Maartje, George, Shafique, Oana, Georgia, Cesar, Pepe, Vinit, Ellen, Alexa, Yoshita, Amrita, Aurora, Federica, Dong-Wei, Julia and Nilima. It was a pleasure to meet all of you. I truly hope we will meet again. Jacky, you deserve your own line because you have always been so “peculiar”. Thank you, I would not have had this thesis without you, literally. Thank you for coming to my desk to share your awesome ideas. It was difficult at times, but very fruitful to work with you. In the end, our names will be together forever. Denise, thanks for helping me in the lab when I needed it the most; also for those crazy moments we shared, I hope we can see a Manson’s concert once again! And Albert and John, babies, it’s a wild world ♫♫ thanks for the good, long, and loud laughs in the office, they really helped me to write all those chapters. I’m not quite sure who will provide the stash of corn from now on ;)

Lili, Renée and Berit, you were the best students a student could ask for. Thanks, not just for being a crucial part in the execution and conclusion of my PhD, but also for teaching me how to teach. Thank you for allowing me to share the little knowledge I have. I enjoyed a lot to work next to you and wish you tons of success in your careers and life.

MariaT, thanks for giving me the chance to join Inmunovirología and for always teaching with passion and strength. Paulita, Will, Wbe, Anita, Sandrita, Dani, Dianita, JuanGui, Cesar, Clau and Angelita, thanks for being part of the beginning of this experience and for always encouraging me to pursue my goals.

“La amistad es una semilla que brota en cualquier lugar...
Hay amor en todas partes y en cada rincón del mundo” ♫♫♫ Habana Blues.
“Friendship is a seed that springs anywhere ...
There is love everywhere and in every corner of the world”

Marcy and Peng, you were my first friends in Gro and I will always remember the awesome times we shared together. Thanks for your sweetness and sarcasm (respectively) at exactly the right moment and for listening to my stories while teaching me how to use chopsticks. I hope we will meet once again when I start my new Asian chapter! Vanesa, you also, for accepting me the way I am when no one else wanted to. Thank you for the music, the port, the therapy sessions. We still need to meet again in a festival. I will bring Cocoa Krispies for you ☻
Acknowledgements

Vivi, Gabi, Ailine, Andrés, Maria, David, Alejo, Javier, Lili, Marty, Cris, Dieguito!
I never expected I would encounter so many Locombians (natural and “honorary”) in these low lands. But I guess it was a gift the universe was reserving for me. You are the only ones that make Dutch people feel like foreigners in their own country (sorry Nils) and Colombians feel home in Groningen. We all left our country pursuing our dreams and finding other Colombian dreamers makes the road much easier, funnier, tastier, louder and full of laughter. I don’t have more to say than Gracias. Laura, of course you are part of this Locombian family, but to you, I also need to thank for following me around the globe while taking with you a little bit of what is known, of certainty. Thanks for being my novia when I needed it and for being a great friend. For your always down-to-earth advice and for listening and remembering all the silly things I say. Alf, I have no words, I could never thank you enough for being my dearest friend in Gro. From hate to love! Thanks for all the coffees, for cooking for me, for taking care of me, for sharing my worries and happiness, for being mi mejor amigo, amigooo. Wherever I go, all of you, locombians, will always have a place in my heart and in my home.

“Hay recuerdos que no voy a borrar, personas que me quiero llevar, aromas que no voy a olvidar” ♫♫♫ Fito Páez.

“There are memories that I will not wipe away, people that I want to take along, aromas that I will not forget”

Leaving is never easy. It hurts not because of the weather or the food. It hurts because of the people we leave behind. To my family and friends that from afar have been an essential piece of this achievement, thanks for being, for caring, for remembering me. Luce and Christian, through the good and the rough times, it’s always been the three of us. It will always be the three of us. No matter where, I take you always along. Mary, Vane, Lauri, Sarita and Ka, despite the different paths we have chosen in our lives, we always find a point to meet. Thank you for your unconditional and infinite friendship.

“Home is wherever I’m with you” ♫♫♫ Edward Sharpe and The Magnetic Zeros.

Mitch, I cannot not express all the things I want to thank you for. I thank you for being the redacteur of this thesis, for reading and trying to understand these chapters, for making them better. For your unconditional support during this whole experience. I also thank you for bringing new friends to my life (Pieter, Jaap, Hugo, Edwin, Tom,
Bas) and for allowing me to be part of your beautiful family. **Frits, Berdien, Joce and Phil**, who have always been kind, caring and loving and from the beginning made me feel at home. I am grateful for having a family like you guys. More importantly, mi Lego, I thank you for changing my life, for bringing love and happiness to it, for reshuffling my priorities. I learn from you constantly and every day spent next to you have made me a better person. Thank you for being my best friend and my partner in adventures. Thank you for loving me and for expressing it in a thousand different ways. *Ik hou van jou*, and I can see the waves on distant shores awaiting our arrival.

"See the waves on distant shores awaiting your arrival" ♫♫♫ Pearl Jam.