ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This PhD thesis is the result of a project born from a Prof. Lobbezoo’s idea and it could not be concluded without his strong support. He helped me a lot to come through this hard path successfully, and it is to him that my most sincere appreciation and acknowledgement are directed.

Beste Frank, is voor mij een genoegen de mogelijkheid te hebben gehad om een onvergetelijke ervaring te beleven als degene die je bood me. Mijn achting voor jou wordt begeleid door een groot respect voor jouw welverdiende reputatie voor uitmuntend onderzoek en vooral voor jouw bescheiden persoon en jouw altijd beschikbaar zijn. Als teken van dankbaarheid voor de eer die je mij hebt gegund, geef ik je mijn vriendschap met liefde.

This thesis is also professionally dedicated to all the colleagues, students, and assistants with whom I have been in contact during my career so far. A list should miss someone, so I prefer to include everyone in one common acknowledgement... Some of them are true friends and cooperate with me for academic and professional purposes, helping me a lot to reach my targets, work with happiness, and be recognized as a scientist. Others went lost over the years, but I still have a positive feeling about all my past experiences. I hope everyone remember me and think about me as a person who had something to give. That something was especially the passion for our work and the constant feeling of being lucky to have so many possibilities to grow professionally and personally...thank you!

Among the colleagues I met during the years, a special role is reserved to my friend Dr. Luca Guarda Nardini...Caro Luca, ci siamo incontrati quasi per caso ormai anni fa, ma credo che possiamo essere entrambi soddisfatti di ciò che abbiamo combinato insieme, regalando a noi stessi e alla clinica universitaria di Padova una fantastica visibilità internazionale nell’ambito della nostra materia. Qui però non è tempo di autocompiacimento, ma di ringraziamenti, quindi vorrei chiederti di non sottovalutare mai l’importanza che l’incontro con te ha avuto nella mia crescita professionale nella sua intezza, e spero davvero che il prossimo futuro porti ad entrambi ciò che sentiamo di meritare per l’impegno profuso in una vita di studio!