2. Acknowledgments

Prof. Hanski was an attentive, patient, and highly professional teacher. The first words of thanks are for him.

Working could have been less proficient and less amusing without the help, experience, and kindness of Mandar, Marie-Luise, Moorthy, Britta, and Ulla. Thanks to Eva, Miriam, Andreas, Anja, Benno, and Marcos.

The Sonnenfeld Foundation is greatly thanked for the support of this work.

The work is dedicated to my family and friends, without them sometimes efforts and hard working seems to be without content. The loving words of Teo and Ila, of Nonna Maria, Luisa and Giuseppe; the warm friendship with Sibylle, Caterina, Katia, Nicole, and Eva. Thanks that you are like you are, to: Michaela and Luca, Iacopo, Cosimo, Alex, Lavinia, Ross, Simone, and Heiko. Thanks for the good advices to Prof. Batistoni and to Annamaria and Marco. Massi occupies, as always, a special place.

My father and my mother are not-scientific examples of love and perfection.

Setting was Berlin, a city that is deeply rooted in my heart.