

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness and render my warmest thanks to my supervisor, Professor Arto Salomaa, who made this work possible. His friendly guidance and expert advice have been invaluable throughout all stages of the work.

I would also wish to express my gratitude to Professor Grzegorz Rozenberg for extended discussions and valuable suggestions which have contributed greatly to the improvement of the thesis.

The thesis has also benefited from comments and suggestions made by Dr. Gheorghe Păun and Dr. Alexandru Mateescu who have read through the manuscript. I take this opportunity to thank them.

Special thanks are due to my husband, Dr. Jarkko Kari, for his continuous support and understanding, but also for more concrete things like commenting on earlier versions of the thesis, helping with the figures and the final preparation of the manuscript. My thanks are extended to my father-in-law, Principal Antti Kari, for the drawing on the cover.

The person with the greatest indirect contribution to this work is my mother, Dumitra Sântean, who has taught me love of mathematics. I want to thank her, my father, as well as my brother Nic, for their constant encouragement.

This thesis has been written during my stay at the Mathematics Department of the University of Turku. I would like to thank the Academy of Finland for providing excellent working conditions and Suomen Kulttuuri-rahasto (Maili Autio foundation) for its financial support.

Turku, September 30th, 1991

Lila Kari