Acknowledgements

And so I reach the end of my PhD journey. These four years were intense, to the point of feeling that the expression “blood, sweat and tears” can indeed be pretty literal sometimes. Still, it was an amazing experience that I do not regret at all. And, for a good part, because of the great people who supported me along the way. Simply naming them in this limited space (and risking forgetting a few) will never be representative of how much I owe them for the success of this work and my personal and professional growth.

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Barbara M. Tomotani