

Acknowledgements

First, I am most grateful to my supervisor, Professor Wade Allison, for his guidance and attention throughout my studies at Oxford. He has always been a driving force and a source of inspiration.

I am indebted to the Rhodes Trust for generously funding my research and for offering me the opportunity to expand my cultural and social horizons.

Several people assisted me in my work. I express my gratitude to Hugh Gallagher, who has been a great collaborator and supporter. He was there every time I needed his opinion and advice, always patient and good-willed. I also wish to thank him for his active participation in the check-scan. John Cobb deserves special thanks for the (often long) discussions over my work. His comments and constructive criticism were valuable. I am grateful to Nick West, whom I often consulted over all sorts of computer programming problems. Nick's experience was instrumental in the successful and user-friendly incorporation of RINSE into the Soudan 2 software library. The assistance of Geoff Pearce in, among other things, setting my tape libraries at the RAL datastore is highly appreciated.

My gratitude is extended to my collaborators in Soudan 2, and especially to Bill Miller and the mine-crew for maintaining the detector in a very good shape – we could not do it without them. Many thanks to Peter Litchfield and Earl Peterson for offering their expertise and advise over numerous occasions.

It was a pleasure sharing the office with Ursula Wielgosz and David Petyt. I would like to thank Ursula for proof-reading the entire thesis in a weekend and David for helping with the plots in the Introduction and for many chats on F1 and Star Wars.

I am grateful to the computer support managers at the Particle Physics department, in particular to Ian McArthur and Chris Hunter, for their time and assistance on any odd computer query – especially when two days before submission I encountered the worst bugs MS-Word had in store. I will miss the top-quality service. I also wish to thank John McAllister for keeping the VMS system running smoothly.

For their moral support, presence and humour, I am grateful to my brother, Emilios, as well as to my friends Nicolas Vassilopoulos, Effie Spentzou, Thalia and Nigel Spencer and Maria Stamatopoulou. Above all, I want to thank Nelly Zimi for her love.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents for their unwavering love and trust.

Argyris Stassinakis

December 1997