

# Preface

This volume is based on the lecture notes of the International Conference “Ruthenate and Rutheno-cuprate Materials: Theory and Experiments” held in Vietri sul Mare (Salerno)–Italy from 25th to 27th October 2001.

One of the most important developments associated with the discovery of high-temperature superconductivity in the cuprates has been a rapid growth in our understanding of related oxides. Oxides display all the ground states of strongly correlated electron physics, from many-body insulators to metals on the border of applicability of the well-known Fermi liquid theory. The various forms of magnetism which also occur are linked to a host of interesting properties such as colossal magnetoresistance and unconventional superconductivity. Recently, the class of ruthenate materials has been the focus of considerable work because of their interesting magnetic and superconducting properties.

Detailed studies of perovskite-like ruthenates belonging to the Ruddlesden-Popper series  $\text{Sr}_{n+1}\text{Ru}_n\text{O}_{3n+1}$  have revealed an unexpectedly rich physics including itinerant  $4d$  magnetism in  $\text{SrRuO}_3$ , triplet superconductivity in  $\text{Sr}_2\text{RuO}_4$ , and quantum critical phenomena in the bilayer compound  $\text{Sr}_3\text{Ru}_2\text{O}_7$ . Although much has been learned about these materials from a theoretical and experimental point of view, there is a lot of interesting physics beyond this level.

The enthusiasm in the physics and phenomenology of the ruthenate oxides has grown by the remarkable observation in hybrid rutheno-cuprate materials of superconductivity arising up to at least  $T_c=35\text{K}$  in  $\text{GdSr}_2\text{RuCu}_2\text{O}_y$ , despite its being ferromagnetic (FM) already at  $T_m=132\text{K}$ . In this respect,  $\text{GdSr}_2\text{RuCu}_2\text{O}_y$  appears to be unique as a ferromagnet that becomes superconducting well within the FM phase. This compound can be derived from the YBCO high- $T_c$  superconductors by replacing the CuO chains by  $\text{RuO}_2$  layers and are characterized by a sequence of  $\text{CuO}_2$  double layers carrying the superconductivity and  $\text{RuO}_2$  layers responsible of the magnetism. Nevertheless, the coexistence of superconductivity and long range magnetic order is intriguing and, in spite of extensive investigation, a consistent picture of the magnetic structure is still lacking.

The volume includes articles on various topics in this field and are grouped in three main parts devoted to  $\text{Sr}_2\text{RuO}_4$ , to rutheno-cuprate materials, and to  $\text{SrRuO}_3$  and  $\text{Sr}_3\text{Ru}_2\text{O}_7$ , respectively. However, the ordering of the papers is largely arbitrary, since the problems addressed overlap to a considerable extent. The authors are specialists in their respective fields and are actively engaged in the study of the problems touched upon by them. For this reason we are

confident that this book will attract the attention of the readers and will prove to be useful for researchers involved in Solid State Physics.

We would like to express our gratitude towards the eminent scientists who have promptly and kindly accepted our invitation to give their lectures, and to all the participants who helped to create a warm and stimulating atmosphere, with their presence and interesting discussions.

This Conference has certainly summarized many of the recent theoretical and experimental issues on ruthenate and rutheno-cuprate materials. A number of factors, however, made it special: the non minor benefit coming from the wonderful and warm venue of Vietri sul Mare; the large number of young and enthusiastic people and the feeling of forming a community.

Salerno,  
July 2002

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## Acknowledgements

Organizing a conference is a real hard task, but a great honour too. So it has been an honour when my colleagues Prof. Canio Noce, Dr. Antonio Vecchione, Dr. Mario Cuoco and Dr. Alfonso Romano asked me to join them in the organization of the "Ruthenate and Rutheno-Cuprate Materials: Theory and Experiments" conference. And an honour even greater is to have been asked to write a few words to thank, in the name of all the local organizing committee, those people who have collaborated towards the good success of the conference.

These cultural initiatives, in fact, require the use of relevant financial resources that, in our case, have been provided by public as well as private institutions and industries. Needless to say that, without their support, it would have been really hard to maintain such a high standard for our conference, and to achieve the success the participants have so kindly recognized us, so we want to acknowledge them all in an explicit form.

We would like to thank the "Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici" in the persons of its President Dr. Gerardo Marotta and of its General Secretary Prof. Antonio Gargano, that, with its prestigious support of experience and its important financial effort has significantly contributed to the success of our initiative. Noticeable financial assistance, as well as organizing contribute, have been provided by the Salerno's research unit of the "Istituto Nazionale di Fisica della Materia" that we would like to thank in the person of its director Prof. Giovanni Costabile. Invaluable has been the contribute from our university, the "Università degli Studi di Salerno": we thank in particular the "Dipartimento di Fisica 'E.R. Caianiello'", in the person of its director Prof. Ferdinando Mancini, that has given a financial and organizing support, and the "Facoltà di Scienze", in the person of its Headmaster Prof. Genoveffa Tortora, for financially contributing to this conference. A consistent financial support has been also provided by local institutions as the "Provincia di Salerno", that we thank in the person of its President Dr. Alfonso Andria, and the "Comune di Salerno", that we thank in the persons of Aldermen Dr. Gianfranco Valiante and Dr. Ermanno Guerra. As regards private industry, we thank here "Philips Analytical" for its valuable financial support, and in particular Dr. Gianfranco Brignoli.

Moreover, we acknowledge all those people who have contributed in personal form and mainly Prof. Attilio Immirzi, of the "Dipartimento di Chimica, Università degli Studi di Salerno", for scientific assistance and financial support, Dr. Sergio Marotta for its precious collaboration and advice, and Mr. Vincenzo Di Marino for assistance in graphics and designing.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all those people who have helped us in all backstage work, preparing bag kits, cutting and mounting badges, material and personal transportation, technical assistance etc., it is a hard and sometimes boring work, but essential for the success of any such initiative: thanks again, you've been great!

Salerno,  
July 2002

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