

Epilogue

I hope that posterity will judge me kindly, not only as to the things which I have explained, but also to those which I have intentionally omitted so as to leave to others the pleasure of discovery.

R. DESCARTES, *La géométrie*.

Here comes the end of our journey in the non-rigid world, a new and fascinating field of research on the boundary of computer vision, pattern recognition, computer graphics, and numerical geometry. However, the exploration does not end here, as there is still much to say and much to discover. Some parts of the non-rigid world still remain a *terra incognita* (unknown land), or, like self-confident cartographers of the great era of exploration preferred to write on their incomplete maps, *terra nondum cognita* (not yet known land), to optimistically say that those coming after them would discover this territory.

This book, to the best of our knowledge, is the first attempt to consistently present the map of the non-rigid world and bring together a wide spectrum of problems and approaches. As any first attempt, it is prone to critique. Anticipating the question why a certain work is not mentioned, we should say that comprehensive overview of all the research related to non-rigid shape analysis was not our main goal. Instead, we rather tried to present a common denominator of numerous apparently unrelated fields, problems, solutions, and algorithms. We are aware of the fact that a large number of works has been left outside the scope of our discussion and hope to extend our discussion in future editions to address new problems and new methods.

The decision to finish this book at the face recognition chapter leaves us with a slight sensation of dissatisfaction of a mission not completely accomplished. At the same time, we believe in the value of timely publication, and however imperfect and incomplete, our treatise hopefully presents new points of view and gives some food for thought. We hope this book will catalyze the interest in non-rigid shapes and generate research leading to new results and approaches that will eventually remove the uncharted spots from our map of the non-rigid world.