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Nota di contenuto	Contents; Foreword; Acknowledgment; List of Symbols; Chapter 1 Introduction; Chapter 2 The Basics of Euclidean and Spherical Geometries and a New Proof of the Problem of Thirteen Spheres; Chapter 3 Circle Packings and Sphere Packings; Chapter 4 Geometry of Local Cells and Specific Volume Estimation Techniques for Local Cells; Chapter 5 Estimates of Total Buckling Height; Chapter 6 The Proof of the Dodecahedron Conjecture; Chapter 7 Geometry of Type I Configurations and Local Extensions; Chapter 8 The Proof of Main Theorem I; Chapter 9 Retrospects and Prospects; References; Index
Sommario/riassunto	The dense packing of microscopic spheres (i.e. atoms) is the basic geometric arrangement in crystals of mono-atomic elements with weak covalent bonds, which achieves the optimal "known density" of $\pi/\sqrt{18}$ . In 1611, Johannes Kepler had already "conjectured" that $\pi/\sqrt{18}$ should be the optimal "density" of sphere packings. Thus, the central problems in the study of sphere packings are the proof of Kepler's conjecture that $\pi/\sqrt{18}$ is the optimal density, and the establishing of

the least action principle that the hexagonal dense packings in crystals  
are the geometric consequence of optimization of

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