



Editorial

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The collection of papers in this edition signals a new departure for our journal. At a meeting of many of the editors in Oxford in 2018, the idea evolved of having occasional focused special issues. Rather soon after the meeting, two themes crystallized. The current editors suggested having a special issue addressing the history of the development of ideas that form the basis of formal methods. Our aim is to facilitate the collection of source material for later historians.

We approached a number of authors whom we felt could write perceptive accounts of the evolution and relationship of ideas. Some ten groups, or individual authors, agreed to work on contributions. This volume contains the first fruits and we hope that at least some of the other authors will be encouraged to complete their papers. We also hope that this special edition will prompt further contributions and we would be happy to discuss any proposals.

The first paper here is from a “card carrying” historian and we are grateful to Tom Haigh for encouraging the collection of source material even if it does not yet conform to the norms of historical writing.

The more technical papers cover Hoare Logic, the evolution of two widely used theorem proving assistants (Isabelle and ACL2) and co-induction and bisimulation.

A strong incentive to gather source material is seen in the inclusion of an obituary in this special issue. Zohar Manna was an incredible scientist and a wonderful person. It is a sadness to have to publish an obituary. The fact that we can no longer obtain direct input from Zohar is somewhat offset by the valuable and fitting tribute to Zohar.

This editorial was written in Porto at the time of the FM’19 World Congress whose date coincided with the 50th anniversary of the publication of Tony Hoare’s key paper introducing Axiomatic Semantics.

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