

Preface

Computing machines, today, seem both ubiquitous and on the verge of disappearing. They evolve and metamorphose in everyday objects, from slates and phones to cars and watches; often, they simply become part of the landscape. However, it was not always so; and perhaps it will not always be so.

The Third Conference on the History and Philosophy of Computing was held in Pisa in a most fitting location for these musings. It took place in the Museum of Computing Machinery (Museo degli Strumenti per il Calcolo) of the University of Pisa, and the collections displayed there show a wonderful variety of forms and functions, from the earliest modern computing machines to the personal computers of the end of the twentieth century. Those machines have a long history, and the background of this history involves a long philosophy.

This polymorphism of computing was displayed in the variety of contributions from the participants, too. As this volume shows, the interests of the researchers in this field show amazing variety and ingenuity. We believe that the conference, held under the auspice of the DLMPST/DHST Inter-Division Commission for the History and Philosophy of Computing, offered the opportunity to survey the current state of the art, and as such it compares with the successful first and second conference, held in Ghent in 2011 and in Paris in 2013.

Indeed, even in this third edition, the HaPoC Conference brought together researchers interested in the historical developments of computers as well as researchers reflecting on the sociological and philosophical issues related to computing. From the Middle Ages to the latest theoretical tendencies, the swath of ground covered there was large.

A total of 30 out of 50 submitted papers were accepted, along with six invited talks. The selected abstracts were then printed in a volume of preconference proceedings (Pisa University Press, 2015) and distributed to the attendees at the conference.

After the conference, the authors were asked to submit a full version of their papers for these proceedings, and most of them did indeed accepted the invitation. All the submissions were anonymously reviewed, with the all-important contribution of the members of the HaPoC Program Committee, to whom goes much of the merit for the quality and the speed of the work. The final result of this process is the book you hold in your hands. This is the first published volume of proceedings for an HaPoC Conference: We hope it to be the first in a series, since we feel that it will help disseminate the very idea of the history and philosophy of computing.

As for the contents, the Pisa conference was divided into a range of thematic sessions: six sessions ranging from the world history of computing to the role of computing in the humanities and the arts. For the present proceedings, as for the preconference volume, we did not try to do the same. In this field, labels are so arbitrary that printing the papers in alphabetical order, without any attempt to categorize them, seemed to us the wisest option. The invited talks are included first, followed by the

regular submissions. The summaries of the papers provide a good idea of the variety of topics and of the vitality of the community that gathered around them.

For anyone who attended the conference, the print version will lack one of the things that made HaPoC 2015 so interesting: the vibrant discussions among the attendees. Many of these discussions led to revisions and additions that were incorporated in the final texts. However, the discussion itself is impossible to reproduce in this form and it can be only glimpsed and imagined by the reader. We hope that participating in such a stimulating forum can be one further motive to attend the upcoming HaPoC conferences.

Finally, we must thank the many people and institutions that contributed both to the conference and to the publication of the proceedings. Among others, Arthur Tatnall, former chair of the IFIP Working Group 9.7 on the History of Computing, and Giuseppe Lettieri, chair of the Organizing Committee, which included Valeria Barboni, Elisabetta Mori, and Sara Pallucco. The conference was supported by the Fondazione Galileo Galilei and by the University of Pisa. We also gladly acknowledge the support from the Department of Computer Science and the Department of Philology, Literature, and Linguistics of the University of Pisa and from the AILA-Associazione Italiana di Logica, as well as the help provided by the EasyChair system for the submission procedure.

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