



Preface

The WORDS 2005 Conference was the fifth of a series initiated in 1997 in Rouen (France). The conference topic is the study of words in Lothaire's spirit, that is with emphasis on the combinatorial, algebraic and algorithmic aspects. Motivations come often from other domains such as theoretical computer science, and also from the seminal work of Marcel-Paul Schützenberger, who initiated the systematic study of words. The growing importance of combinatorics on words is acknowledged by the series of Lothaire's books on the subject, whose impact on other areas of mathematical is valuable.

The conference program included six plenary talks and also 28 contributed communications selected by the Program Committee, consisting of Jean Berstel, James Currie, Clelia De Felice, Aldo de Luca, Juhani Karhumäki, Jean Néraud and Christophe Reutenauer. Previous conferences were held in Rouen (France, 1997 and 1999), Palermo (Italy, 2001) and Turku (Finland, 2003), and the next one is scheduled to be in Marseille (France) in September 2007.

The organisation of WORDS 2005 was generously sponsored by the Centre de Recherches Mathématiques (CRM), the Ministry of Education of Quebec (MEQ), the Chaire de Recherche du Canada en Algèbre, Combinatoire et Informatique Mathématique of the Canadian Research Chair program (NSERC) and the Laboratoire de Combinatoire et d'Informatique Mathématique (LaCIM). The financial support of the Faculté des Sciences de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences (PIMS) is also acknowledged.

The complete proceedings of WORDS 2005 were published in the series "Publications du LaCIM vol. 36", and this special issue contains 16 papers, extended versions of contributed communications. They were selected by the Program Committee and the Guest Editors of this issue shortly after the conference. The papers appear now following a thorough peer-reviewing process.

We take this opportunity to thank all the authors for their contributions to this special issue and the anonymous referees who provided numerous suggestions that improved the articles. Special thanks are due to Professor Giorgio Ausiello, Chief Editor of TCS, for having granted the opportunity to publish this special issue devoted to WORDS 2005.

Finally, we were fortunate to count on a number of collaborators that contributed to the success of the conference: the secretary Lise Tourigny, the webmaster André Lauzon, our students Annie Lacasse, Geneviève Paquin, Xavier Provençal, and also Anouk Bergeron-Brlek. Our warmest thanks for their invaluable assistance and contribution in the organisation of the event.

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