Preface

It is my privilege to write this preface for the newly launched fully electronic journal JoRMiCS — *Journal on Relational Methods in Computer Science.*

Over decades considerable work has been done in *using, applying* and *studying* relations in the broadest sense, but these efforts were widely distributed and incoherent. Since the beginning nineties of the preceding century, researchers became increasingly aware that they were working on very similar things albeit in different settings, different notation, and sometimes with not yet unified concepts.

In the late eighties, new books on relations had appeared showing increasing interest in this field, from the theoretical side with Stephen Givants and Alfred Tarskis *Formalisation of Set Theory Without Variables*, from the boolean matrix perspective with my own book *Relationen und Graphen*, co-authored with Thomas Ströhlein, and in addition from the categorical side with *Categories and Allegories* by Peter Freyd and Andrej Scedrov.

When the collection *Relational Methods in Computer Science* edited by Chris Brink, Wolfram Kahl, and myself grew out of the highly successful start of the series of RelMiCS conferences, the situation began to change remarkably. The conferences brought together researchers from all countries and were held nearly over all continents in a one and a half year rhythm.

Since 2001 another group started to meet regularly, the European COST Action 274 TARSKI (*Theory and Applications of Relational Structures as Knowledge Instruments*). So yet a broader field of applications was opened, raising interest in these ideas of about one hundred researchers in diaspora. Relations are used to model, to compute, and to reason about real world situations. Preferences, social choice procedures, and multi-criteria decision methods are traced back to the underlying relational structures. Physical phenomena are treated using interval algebras, compass algebras — in both cases relation algebras. With this broad range of topics, the TARSKI group meets regularly in approximately a four month period, supported by the intergovernmental framework COST for *European Co-operation in Scientific and Technical Research.*

Given these by now established communities, it seems only natural to launch also a corresponding journal. The founding initiative of the year 2000 met positive interest, so that a group of editors could be formed, the corporate governance of which was formulated in full consensus.

We are now looking forward to receive high-quality research articles out of the spectrum just indicated. One end will be for relations what a numerics journal provides for Analysis and Linear Algebra. At the other end, there will be the logical questions and the constraint handling as treated relationally today.

With the present volume, the electronic journal JoRMiCS starts its existence. I wish our joint endeavour success and fortune — it deserves it.

September 2004 Gunther Schmidt