Preface

In the late 1960s, Ronald Lee designed the Inverse Projection technique, thereby making an important contribution to progress in historical demographic studies. This is because Inverse Projection enables inferences about fertility, mortality, and population age structures from observed series of births and deaths, and some information about population size.

Since its introduction, several modifications have been made to Lee's original procedure in order to address some of its shortcomings and methodological limits, and to make the procedure suitable for existing sources. Not surprisingly, researchers involved in this field sometimes remained unpersuaded by the proposed solutions and the debate on inverse projection techniques, lively and stimulating as it has been, continued unabated. The contribution of Italian researchers to this debate was particularly active in the last decade.

The present volume collects a selection of articles that were presented at the Workshop on Inverse Projection Techniques. It was held in Sabaudia (Italy) on 25-27 May 2000 under the auspices of the Italian Society of Historical Demography and organised by the editors of this book. All papers have been revised since the workshop. The volume also includes a reflection by Ronald Lee, and the re-print of a paper by Salvatore Bertino and Eugenio Sonnino on the stochastic approach to this procedure, recently published in Mathematical Population Studies.

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   This set of papers gives a partial but significant overview of the vitality of research in population reconstruction methods. The editors would like to thank all authors involved in the production of this volume and hope that the book will make some contribution to research in this field.

Elisabetta Barbi
Salvatore Bertino
Eugenio Sonnino