

## Preface

During the first week of August (3–9th) 2008, the Brazilian probabilistic community together with a group of international participants, met in the *Antiga Escola de Minas* of the Federal University of Ouro Preto (UFOP), for the XIIth edition of the Brazilian School of Probability (XII EBP).

For 11 consecutive years, the school took place on the Atlantic coast in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In 2008, for the first time, the EBP was organized and held in the state of Minas Gerais, at the heart of the historic city of Ouro Preto.

Shortly before XII EBP began, a proposal was made to create a special issue of the *Brazilian Journal of Probability and Statistics* dedicated entirely to articles contributed by participants and special invitees of the event.

It is with pleasure that we now present this issue which includes 13 contributions from different areas of probability that have been part of the scientific program of the school.

Among the featuring contributions, two papers are closely related to the two minicourses of the school: Amir Dembo and Andrea Montanari delivered a course entitled *Gibbs measures and phase transitions on sparse random graphs*, while *Introduction to metastability* was lectured by Alexandre Gaudillière and Elisabetta Scoppola.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank all of the authors for their valuable contributions.

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The beautiful representation of the detail of a baroque sculpture from the church N. S. do Pilar, in Ouro Preto, was kindly donated by Letícia Guimarães. We warmly thank her for this gift.

Last but not least, we are thankful to all the colleagues who generously worked as referees for the papers in this issue.

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