Lab report

Digital Design (EDA322)

Group 01

Erik Thorsell1
Robert Gustafsson

February 15, 2015

Contents

1 Introduction

Understanding the complex architecure of a modern central processing unit can seem difficult, at best. This report aims to give a brief introduction to the functionality, development process and finished version of the ChAcc processor. The report covers the development of: the ALU and its parts, the design of the registers and memory components, the bus and the controller unit. The finished product was later tested exstensively and programmed onto an FPGA (Field-Programmable Gate Array). The last two sections covers this.

2 Method

2.1 Arithmetic and Logic Unit (ALU)

The ALU (Arithmetic and Logic Unit) is one of the core components in a CPU (Central Processing Unit). As the name vouches the ALU is in control of the operations between operands. An ordinary ALU does arithmetic as well as logic operations, however the ChAcc (Chalmers Accumulator) processor comes with a slightly reduced set of instructions. Because of this the ChAcc ALU is limited to the operations: addition, subtraction as well as the logical operations nand (not and), not, aswell as a comparison operation. One should also note that the operations are only supported for unsigned numbers.

The purpose of the laboration was to implement the ALU, mentioned above, in VHDL. Broken into several stages the first one was to implement an RCA (Ripple Carry Adder), composed of multiple full adders. Briefly, an RCA is a simple adder that can easily be scaled to handle input of various sizes. This is since an RCA is simply a chain of full adders that each takes three bits as input and returns the sum of them aswell as a carry out. These inputs are the two bits that are to be added aswell as a carry in. In our case the inputs to the ALU are composed of two eight bit, unsigned, numbers leaving us with total of eight full adders in the chain.

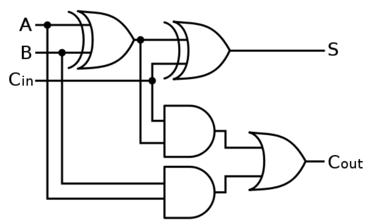

Figure 1: A full adder, decscribed with logical gates.

Using the dataflow design for our full adders the logic was pretty straight forward. The truth table, given in the laboration description, for a full adder speaks for itself and after minimizing the table we moved onto the more interesting part of the laboration, the RCA.

The structural design style of VHDL lets one create instances of already programmed components and was used to create the RCA. After creating eight instances of the full adder it was simply a matter of passing the right arguments to each of the full adders. The least significant bit of each input gets send to the first full adder, along with the carry in, which returns the least significant bit of the sum as well as a first carry out. The second to least significant bits of each input is then send to the second full adder along with the carry out from the first full adder. This is repeated eight times and the carry out of the eigth full adder is the carry out of the RCA. The correctness of the RCA was easily verified by the use of a "do-file".

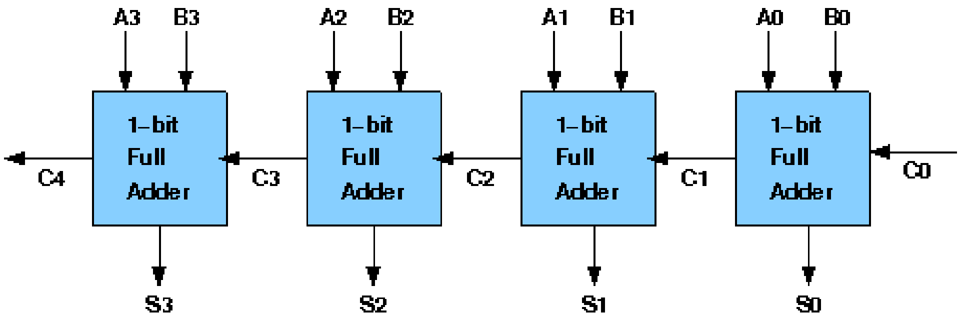

Figure 2: A ripple carry adder, composed out of 4 full adders.

The comparison operation compares two operands and calculates wether or not they are equal. When this is done the corresponding flag (Equal, EQ or Not Equal, NEQ) is asserted. Implementing the component was straight forward and since the instructions specifies one must not use the behavioral design style we opted to use the dataflow style. A *for .. generate* statement was used to improve readability aswell as reduce the amount of code in the file. A bitwise comparison checks if the *n:th* bit of any input differs by the use of an xor gate. For every iteration of the loop, the output of the gate is stored in a temporary signal which is then also used in the loop by the use of an or operation which is done with the new result and the old.

When the loop is done the temporary signal is asserted to the EQ flag, and it is a simpe matter of inverting the signal to get the NEQ flag.

The third task of the laboration was composed of writing the implementation for the subtraction, the not and nand operations, as well as an *isOutZero* signal. Ofcourse one also has to be able to choose between the operations, this ability was implemented using a 4-to-1 multiplexer.

The subtraction operation was simply a matter of performing an addition with one of the operands *two complements representation*. This is achieved by inverting the operand and then add 1 to it. An xor with eight ones with one of the operands as well as adding a carry in to the RCA input solves this. The nand operation is self explained and is achieved by inverting an and with the two operands. The not operation returns the first operand (ALU_inA) inverted. *isOutZero* is done by performing a bitwise or of the output from the multiplexer.

2.2 Top-level Design

Implementing the top-level design of the ChAcc processor included the implementation of storage components, such as memory, registers and the bus, as well as initializing the memory components, and connecting all the datapath components together.

Firstly we created a generic register with asynchronus reset making use of the behavioral design in VHDL. A simple process, triggered by either the clock or the reset signal, firstly checks if the register is to be reseted or not. The register will be reset if and only if the reset signal is 0. However if the reset signal is 1 the process checks if the clock signal was caused by a rising edge and if that is the case the register will be written to if, and only if, the registers load signal is 1.

```vhdl
PROCESS(ARESETN, CLK)
    BEGIN
        IF ARESETN = '0' THEN
            output <= (OTHERS => '0');
        ELSIF rising_edge(CLK) THEN
            IF loadEnable = '1' THEN
                output <= input;
            END IF;
        END IF;
END PROCESS;
```

A register holds only one signal at the time so for larger portions of data the ChAcc has two memories - one for the instructions and one for the data. ChAcc has two memories instead of one since it follows the Hardvard architecture. however making use of generics - as with the register - we only had to implement one, and when implementing the top-level design we instanciated the two memories with generic maps and different init files.

The processor bus was implemented using a 4 to 1 multiplexer along with some extra logic to incorperate the four control signals into one bit. We mimized the expression with the four signals and opted to default to the EXTDATA signal. Two or gates were needed to get the desired functionality.

2.3 Controller

While designing the top level of the ChAcc processor we were provided with a *mock controller*, that acted purely as a place holder. However when that asignment was done we were to implement our very own controller. The controller is used to pass the correct instructions to the correct components of the ChAcc processor at the right time. In order to accomplish this we implemented a Mealy machine, divided into three processes. A Mealy machine is an FSM (Finite-State Machine) whose output values depends both on the current state - as well as the current input - of the machine. A complete diagram of the FSM, as well as code examples for the three processes, can be found in the appendix.

The ChAcc processor's specification documentet provided describes the working of the controller, and the document also specifies which signals are to be set and reset during which operations. This information is crucial in order to implement the controller and was of great use to us.

When the controller was implemented we were provided with a testbench to be run in the simulation software. The testbench tested a couple of operations e.g. adding, subtracting, reading and writing from memory, etc. Unfortunately our processor did not pass the test on our first attempt and we spend many hours trying to figure out why. The problem was finally solved by rewriting our FSM. Our first implementation made use of some logical minimization in order decide what state to enter, however the software seemed not to approve of this and our final implementation uses a simple case statement instead.

2.4 Processor's Testbench

(max: 2 pages)

Describe what you did in lab5. More specifically, describe how you made the testbench to verify that your processor design was functionally correct. For example, you can specify how you generated inputs to the processor during the testing, how you were reading the expected outputs and how you compare the expected outputs with the actual outputs. Also mention if your processor design was working correctly from the beginning and if not describe how you backtrack the bugs. Remember to always explain your design choices and mention any assumptions. Finally, make use of figures and tables.

2.5 ChAcc on Nexys 3 board *(Optional)*

(max: 2 pages)

Describe how you verified the correctness of your FPGA implementation. Note that the code that is executed on the implementation is the same code used for testing in Lab 5. You should compare sequences of values on various signals observed on the seven-segment displays to values seen in Modelsim simulation of the design. Please include in the report the sequence of program counter (PC) and display register values you observed during a successful execution on the FPGA.

2.6 Performance, Area and Power Analysis *(Optional)*

(max: 2 pages)

To be announced in the Lab7PM.

3 Analysis

(max: 1 page)

Summarize your results after performing all the labs (2, 3, 4 and 5).

Mention and discuss interesting findings and observations, as well as difficulties in completing some of the tasks of the four last labs.

After looking at your results, draw conclusions and describe briefly the learning outcome, that is what have you learnt by performing these labs?

A Appendix

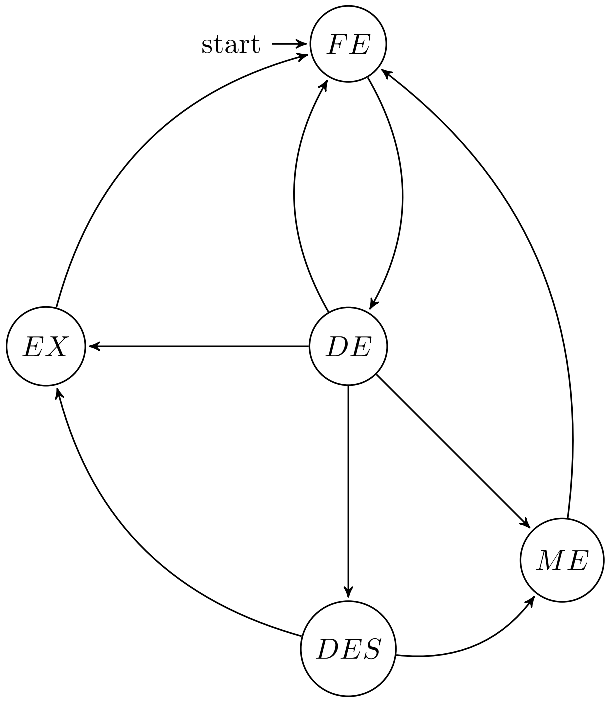

Figure 3: Mealy Finite-State Machine

```
PROCESS(CLK, ARESETN)
BEGIN
IF ARESETN = '0' THEN
    current_state <= FE;
ELSE
    IF (rising_edge(CLK) THEN
        IF master_load_enable = '1' THEN
            current_state <= next_state;
        END IF;
    END IF;
END IF;
END PROCESS
```

```
PROCESS(current_state , opcode)
BEGIN
CASE current_state IS
    WHEN FE =>
        next_state <= DE;
    WHEN DE =>
```

```
        CASE opcode IS
            WHEN "0000" => next_state <= EX;
            WHEN "...." => next_state <= ..;
        END CASE;
    WHEN DES =>
        CASE opcode IS
            ...
        END CASE;
    WHEN ...
END CASE;
END PROCESS
```

```
PROCESS(current_state, opcode)
BEGIN
CASE opcode IS
    WHEN "0000" =>
        CASE current_state IS
            WHEN FE =>
              v_control <= (2 => '1', others => '0');
            WHEN DE =>
              v_control <= (2 | 5 => '1',
                             others => '0');
            WHEN EX =>
              v_control <= (1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 10 => '1',
                             others => '0');
        END CASE;
    WHEN .... =>
END CASE;
END PROCESS
```