

# Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to Ted Eisenberg. It grew out of a symposium with the same title held in May, 2012 on the occasion of Ted's retirement. The venue was Ben Gurion University of the Negev where Ted spent over thirty years as a professor of mathematics education in the mathematics department. Ted received plenty of praise during the event, praise, needless to say, that was well-deserved. However, for a scholar, teacher, and human being like Ted, it is a far greater tribute to discuss ideas that matter to him. Indeed, nothing could be more disheartening for a scholar like Ted than to feel his concerns are ignored or belittled. Ted has confessed to us he has often felt just that in recent years.

Ted's sense of neglect has not been entirely unfounded regarding one concern that has preoccupied him with particular acuteness over the years, namely, the growing distance between mathematicians and mathematics educators. For Ted, to be a mathematics educator one must know and care about mathematics itself. It is a position that, for him, is axiomatic and uncompromising. On the other hand, it is also a fact Ted painfully admits that the development of mathematics education as an academic field has allowed some of its practitioners at times to put mathematical knowledge aside or even pronounce it as irrelevant.

But "at times" does not mean "always" and "some" does not mean "all." The truth of the matter, as we see it, is that mathematics education has developed to a point where the place of mathematics within the field simply cannot be taken for granted: the question of the relationship between mathematics and mathematics education needs to be explored deeply and better understood. And as counterweight to Ted's own sense that there is a lack of urgency about this in the field, the very stature of the mathematics educators and mathematicians who participated in the symposium and who contributed to this book underlines the tremendous interest there actually is on all sides about this question which Ted holds dear.

We are thus grateful to the participants of the symposium who subsequently contributed to this volume, showing how far Ted's concern is their concern. And it must be added that these participants were not only those who presented papers and took part in planned panel discussions, but also those in the audience who asked astute questions and brought up issues enriching the general conversation then and the

ideas in this book now. Many of those audience members were especially invited because we thought that they would indeed enrich the event. So, our first thanks are to all those who came and made that symposium such a great success. Of course, though, there were others whose contribution it is important to us to acknowledge:

- Daniel Berend, Miriam Cohen and Michael Lin from the Department of Mathematics at Ben Gurion University, for their excellent organization of the symposium and their success in finding sources for funding it;
- Abraham Arcavi (Weizmann Institute of Science), Hannah Perl (Israel Ministry of Education), and Norma Presmeg (Illinois State University) who have, together with the editors of this volume served as program committee for the symposium;
- Ina Aviv who has been indefatigable and effective in making sure that all participants were cared for as best as one could imagine before, during and after the symposium;
- The Israel Science Foundation, the Trump Foundation, the Chief Scientist's Office at the Israeli Ministry of Education, the Center for Advanced Studies in Mathematics at Ben Gurion University, the Faculty of the Natural Sciences, and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Ben Gurion University, all of whom have provided generous financial support.

This volume would never have become possible without the symposium. It is an amplification and expansion of the proceedings of the symposium, on which the authors have worked during the year following the symposium. This work was done happily not only because of the importance of its central question but also because it was an opportunity finally to present ideas to the public that we have discussed so often with Ted. More than the symposium itself, in this way, we owe this work to Ted's passionate concerns. So, as Francis Lowenthal, one of Ted's old friends, wrote at the top of his own contribution and throughout it, we also say with pleasure, Thank you, Ted!

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