

## Reminiscences on Visits to Haifa

André C.M. Ran

My first contacts with Leonid Lerer date from the middle of the eighties, when I was still a PhD student at the VU university. Leonia visited Amsterdam regularly, and we maintained warm contacts without actually working together. This changed when I visited Israel for a somewhat longer time in 1996. We started a collaboration which produced a first paper in 1997, and I became a frequent visitor to Haifa after this. All in all, we wrote six papers together, several with students of Leonia.

To visit the Technion and work with Leonia was always a great pleasure. The mathematics was wonderful, and the warm personality of Leonia made visiting there a joy. Leonia was aware of the sensitivities of my family regarding travel to Israel, and so he made sure I was met at the airport by a trusted driver. I was also not allowed to leave campus without a local to guide me.

In early 1998 I visited Haifa for the Tenth Haifa Matrix Meeting. Before leaving I talked to my father, who was terminally ill. A few days into my visit in Haifa my sister called me to inform me that my father had passed away quietly on January 7. I will always be grateful for the support and warmth that I received from Leonia on that day and the following one. Obviously, I had to arrange a very quick return to the Netherlands, and Leonia helped and comforted me as much as possible.

Fortunately, I could return to Haifa for several more Haifa Matrix Meetings and an ILAS Meeting over the course of the years, most of them combined with some extra time to work together with Leonia.

I would like to close with a heartfelt thanks to Leonia for his inspiring lead in our joint work and for his warm friendship.

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