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Shai M.J. Haran

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To Yedidya, Antonia, Elisha, Yehonadav,
Amiad & Yoad.

Preface

This book grew out of lectures given at Kyushu University under the support of the Twenty-first Century COE Program "Development of Dynamical Mathematics with High Functionality" (Program Leader: Prof. Mitsuhiro Nakao). They were meant to serve as a primer to my book [Har5]. Indeed that book is very condense, and hard to read. We included however many new themes, such as the higher rank generalization of [Har5], and the fundamental semigroup. Since the audience consisted mainly of representation theorists, the focus shifted more into representation theory (hence less into geometry). We kept the lecture flair, sometimes explaining basic material in more detail, and sometimes only giving brief descriptions.

This book would have never come to life without the many efforts of Professor Masato Wakayama. The author thanks him also for his incredible hospitality. Thanks are also due to Yoshinori Yamasaki, who did an excellent job of writing down and typing the lectures into LaTeX.

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