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Preliminary Material -- Introduction: Repertoires of Access in Princely Courts -- 1 Access to the Prince's Court in Late Medieval Paris / Florence Berland -- 2 The Court on the Move: Ceremonial Entries, Gift-Giving and Access to the Monarch in France, c.1440–c.1570 / Neil Murphy -- 3 Deceptive Familiarity: European Perceptions of Access at the Mughal Court / Audrey Truschke -- 4 Accessing the Shadow of God: Spatial and Performative Ceremonial at the Ottoman Court / Michael Talbot -- 5 Access at the Court of the Austrian Habsburg Dynasty (Mid-Sixteenth to Mid-Eighteenth Century): A Highway from Presence to Politics? / Mark Hengerer -- 6 Holders of the Keys: The Grand Chamberlain, the Grand Equerry and Monopolies of Access at the Early Modern French Court / Jonathan Spangler -- 7 Patronage, Friendship and the Politics of Access: The Role of the Early Modern Favourite Revisited / Ronald G Asch -- 8 The Struggle for Access: Participation and Distance During a Royal Swedish Minority / Fabian Persson -- 9 Meeting the Prince between the City and the Family: The Resignification of Castello San Giorgio in Mantua (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries) / Christina Antenhofer -- 10 Forging Dynasty: The Politics of Dynastic Affinity in Burgundian-Habsburg Birth and Baptism Ceremonial (1430–1505) / Steven Thiry -- Bibliography -- Index.

Proximity to the monarch was a vital asset in the struggle for power and influence in medieval and early modern courts. The concept of 'access to the ruler' has therefore grown into a dominant theme in scholarship on pre-modern dynasties. Still, many questions remain concerning the mechanisms of access and their impact on politics. Bringing together new research on European and Asian cases, the ten chapters in this volume focus on the ways in which 'access' was articulated, regulated, negotiated, and performed. By taking into account the full complexity of hierarchies, ceremonial rites, spaces and artefacts that characterized the dynastic court, *The Key to Power?* forces us to rethink power relations in the late medieval and early modern world. Contributors are: Christina Antenhofer, Ronald G. Asch, Florence Berland, Mark Hengerer, Neil Murphy, Fabian Persson, Jonathan Spangler, Michael Talbot, Steven Thiry, and Audrey Truschke.