



# Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence: Selected Essays

*Gene Brucker*

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In *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence*, an internationally renowned master of the historian's craft provides a splendid overview of Italian history from the Black Death to the rise of the Medici in 1434 and beyond into the early modern period. Gene Brucker explores those pivotal years in Florence and ranges over northern Italy, with forays into the histories of Genoa, Milan, and Venice. The ten essays, three of which have never before been published, exhibit Brucker's graceful intelligence, his command of the archival sources, and his ability to make history accessible to anyone interested in this place and period. Whether he is writing about a case in the criminal archives, about a citation from Machiavelli, or the concept of modernity, the result is the same: Brucker brings the pulse of the period alive.

Five of these essays explore themes in the premodern period and delve into Italy's political, social, economic, religious, and cultural development. Among these pieces is a lucid, synoptic view of the Italian Renaissance. The last five essays focus more narrowly on Florentine topics, including a fascinating look at the dangers and anxieties that threatened Florence in the fifteenth century during Leonardo's time and a mini-biography of Alessandra Strozzi, whose letters to her exiled sons contain the evidence for her eventful life.

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