

*Walter Pater's European Imagination* by Lene Østermark-Johansen. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2022. 416 pp. + 74 illus. ISBN 9780192858757. £100.

As 2023 marks the 150th anniversary of Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), Lene Østermark-Johansen's *Walter Pater's European Imagination* could not have come out at a better time. Just as Pater's *Renaissance* travelled from medieval France to Winckelmann's Italy, Østermark-Johansen's new book brings to light how Pater's broadly defined and yet strikingly interconnected Renaissance tied "Europe together in one coherent culture, in spite of regional and national differences and conflicts." This idea of the "cohesive powers of European culture across national borders and centuries" runs throughout this ambitious monograph which invites the reader to explore the impressive range of textual and artistic sources that shaped Pater's imagination as well as that of many of his contemporaries and heirs.

The volume is not, however, only about the Renaissance. Østermark-Johansen analyzes Pater's Europhilia in the whole of his *oeuvre*, with particular emphasis on his *Imaginary Portraits* (1887), which may be read as "an idiosyncratic and imaginative history of the European self from antiquity to the 19th century." Østermark-Johansen's own critical edition of *Imaginary Portraits* (2019) for volume 3 of the ongoing Oxford *Collected Works of Walter Pater* had already covered much ground, and yet *Walter Pater's European Imagination* brings to light new material, further demonstrating that Pater, far from being the Brasenose recluse he has often been depicted as, engaged intensely, and even physically, with Continental Europe, especially with France and Italy. This unique relationship with the European heritage was fueled by extensive readings and regular travels, which Østermark-Johansen carefully retraces, having herself followed in Pater's footsteps for her research. A surprisingly embodied portrait of the Oxford don thus emerges from reading *Walter Pater's European Imagination* – that of a cosmopolitan Pater, or rather of a "Europeanist" Pater, to use a word which entered the *OED* in 1881.

But Østermark-Johansen's approach is not solely focussed on the already vast European body of texts to which Pater responded: it also analyzes the rich gallery of images that may be found in his portraits and essays. Her previous work has already addressed the optic and haptic dimensions of Pater's reading of antique sculpture and Renaissance Italy (*Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture*, 2011). This new book, interspersed with purple passages of her own descriptive prose (see for instance her ekphrasis of Giovanni Battista Moroni's *Tailor*, about whom Pater intended to write a portrait) takes this interdisciplinary perspective one step further: the very of