



Studies in the History of the Renaissance (Oxford World's Classics)

Walter Pater, Matthew Beaumont

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Through his highly idiosyncratic readings of some of the finest paintings, sculptures, and poems of the French and Italian Renaissance, Walter Pater in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* redefined the practice of criticism as an impressionistic, almost erotic exploration of the critic's aesthetic responses. Pater's infamous "Conclusion," which forever linked him with the decadent movement, scandalized many with its insistence on making pleasure the sole motive of life, even as it charmed fellow aesthetes such as Oscar Wilde. This edition of *Studies* reproduces the text of the first edition of 1873. Matthew Beaumont's Introduction describes the cultural context that gave rise to the book, the reasons for its notoriety, Pater's philosophical outlook, and the arguments in his book. It explores Pater's work as an attempt to preserve the unique aesthetic of a work of art in the face of encroaching mass culture. The book also includes the later chapter on Giorgione as an Appendix, comprehensive notes that identify the many literary and artistic references, and a useful glossary of names.

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