

Claire Jones, Robert Gordon, Jean-Marie Toulgouat et Andrew Forge, *Monet at Giverny*. Londres, Matthews Miller Dunbar, 1975. 144 pp., illus.

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FIGURE 1. Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*. Hanson, pl. 62.

been rendered respectable by time became a marvellous 'incongruity' when put into Manet's own era. Manet's wit and satiric spirit, referred to by his contemporaries, too rarely come into art historical considerations of his work.

Hanson's discussion of *Le Déjeuner*, in the chapter on the nude, brings out her own original achievements in Manet scholarship, the relating of his paintings to popular prints of the day. Manet consciously related himself to the great tradition in painting through direct derivations and by allusions, but to concentrate too exclusively on this aspect of his work obscures his modernity. Twentieth-century scholarship has tended until recently to ignore the importance of graphic arts and photography in nineteenth-century painting. This was not the case earlier when not only did Baudelaire himself write extensively on caricaturists, but Muther, in his excellent *History of Modern Painting*, gave a large place to the graphic artists as the precursors and creators of modern reality in art.

Hanson shows that many of Manet's motifs can be found in the illustrations of the mid-century, and she reproduces two illustrations from volumes of poetry and songs where dressed men and nude women – main elements in *Le Déjeuner* – appear in a context of water and a boat (see Fig. 2). In each the artist brings out the 'incongruities' of the scene by a juxtaposition of nineteenth-century life with the classical or the primitive, though they are softened by the traditional poses and decoration. As Hanson writes, 'Such sources put us into Manet's own time but leave for him the important jump from their last lingering

references to past ideals to a fully tangible confrontation with the world of his own day.' *Le Déjeuner* forced a comparison with the acceptable Salon nude and with the artificiality of the latter's heritage from Giorgione's and Titan's paintings, while also challenging the hypocritical pruderies of the time by asking the spectator to look a contemporary nude in the face.

A recent reviewer of publications on Manet has complained that American scholars have an obsession with Manet's work of the 1860s, and ignore the later work. Among the reasons for this neglect is certainly the fact that there are fewer problem paintings in the later period. Hanson does pay attention to Manet's work in the '70s, but perhaps does not achieve a balanced view of his whole artistic career. We miss a discussion of the exchange of influences between Manet and Monet, Renoir, and Berthe Morisot, which might throw light on Manet's modernism and his abandonment of contrived subjects and borrowings from past art.

Hanson rounds off her book with an excellent section on Manet's last masterpiece, *The Bar at the Folies Bergère*, which forms a counterpart to his early large painting, *The Old Musician*. She shows how both deal with the theme of alienation in modern life. The earlier painting treats the outcasts of society – the gypsy girl, the absinthe drinker, the wandering Jew – assembled in a no-man's land, yet given dignity, both through the composition and through associations with the 'street philosophers.' *The Bar at the Folies Bergère* is shown as being similarly rich in almost contradictory elements created by the difference between the stiff representation of the barmaid herself and her more relaxed sympathetic reflection. Hanson writes: 'There is a strong contrast between the lonely modern individual isolated by her firm contours and her own reverie from the activity which surrounds her, and her other self, sociably serving a customer. . . . Stasis and action in perpetual balance, Manet has admirably fulfilled Baudelaire's admonition that the modern artist must extract from the ephemeral and transitory the poetic and eternal qualities of his own age.'

It is Manet's search for modernity that Hanson pursues through

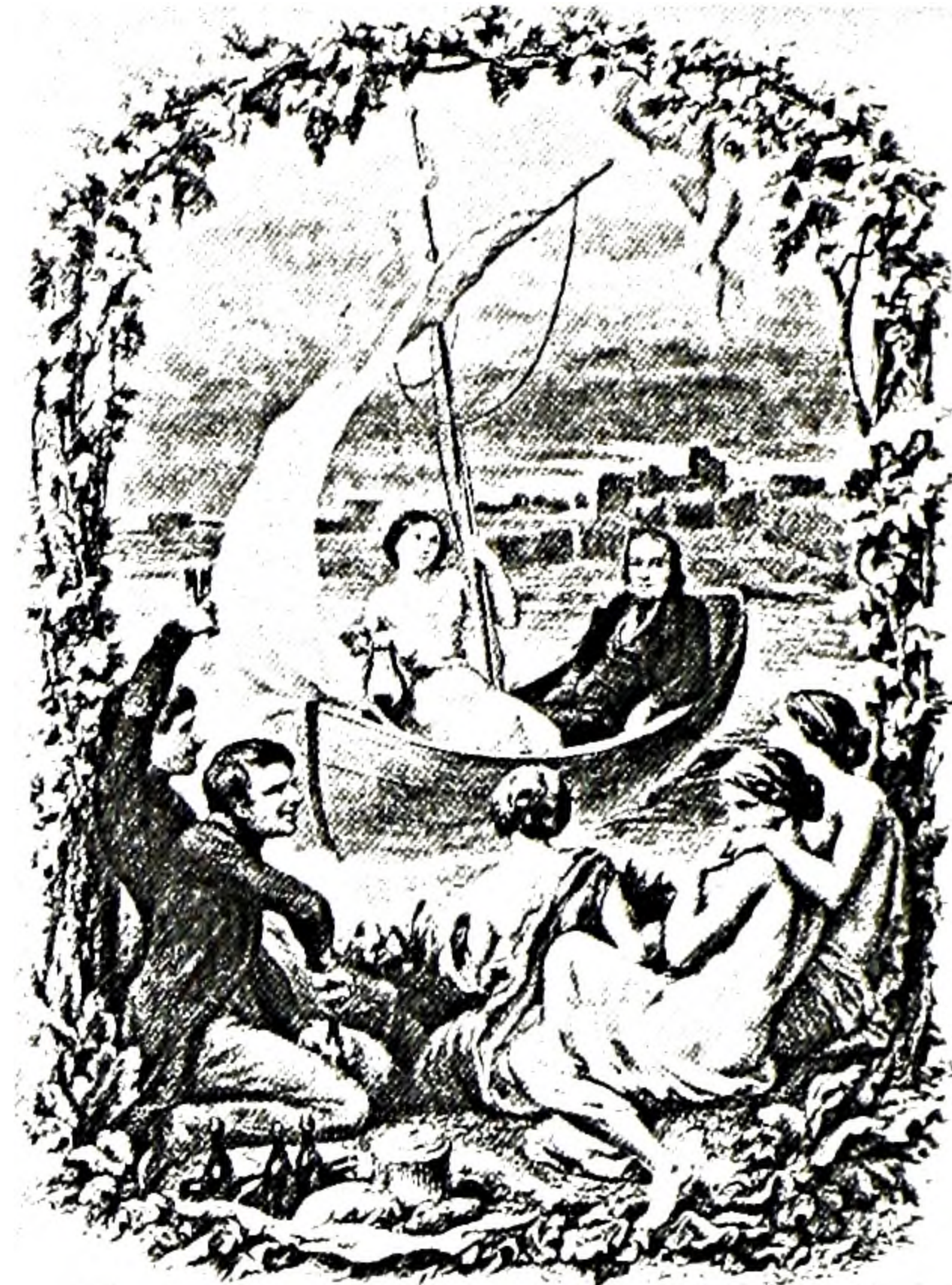


FIGURE 2. *La Rivière*, from Pierre Dupont, *Chants et chansons*, 1855. Hanson, pl. 64.

the convolutions and contradictions of his career, and which provides a splendid conclusion to one of the best books on Manet.

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CLAIRE JONES, ROBERT GORDON, JEAN-MARIE TOULGOUAT et ANDREW FORGE *Monet at Giverny*. Londres, Matthews Miller Dunbar, 1975. 144 pp., illus.

Livre d'étrennes, de vacances, livre d'images pour les admirateurs de Monet, images qui affoleront les nostalgiques des jardins à l'ancienne, associant dans une même passion la poésie des noms de fleurs au Giverny du peintre et au Saint-Sauveur de Sido. En effet, 99 des 144 pages sont consacrées aux illustrations, 24 à des reproductions en couleurs des tableaux de nature peints à Giverny, les autres donnant à voir des photographies pour la plupart empruntées aux collections Toulgouat, Piguët et Truffaut qui ont le charme du jamais vu car les multiples albums publiés sur Monet et l'impressionnisme en général semblent souvent se répéter, tant sur le plan de l'iconographie que sur celui du texte, histoire et analyse critique.

Le texte ici (35 pages), précisément, est sans prétentions scientifiques. Le bref essai critique d'Andrew Forge, qui ouvre le livre, se contente de replacer les tableaux peints à Giverny dans la continuité de l'œuvre, montrant qu'il y a passage de l'interrogation sur l'objet de la vision («le motif», «le sujet»), en liaison dialectique avec les moyens recherchés pour la traduire («technique», «style»), à une interrogation sur les conditions de la vision, son processus opératoire: «What was demanded, as time went on, was that he should ask himself not only what he saw but how he saw» (p. 7). Après une décennie (1880-1890) passée dans la quête inlassable de sujets toujours renouvelés et plus difficiles, il innove avec le système des séries qui satisfait tout à la fois l'instantanéité et la durée, le perpétuel changement et la permanence de la substance, et qui répond par la totalité d'une surface peinte structurée par la seule interaction des taches de couleur et des coups de pinceau à la globalité de la vision saisissant des motifs choisis exprès illimités, dépourvus de centre et de bords: débâcles à Vétheuil; frise indéfinie des peupliers le long de l'Epte; façade de la cathédrale de Rouen perçue non comme la partie d'une architecture mais comme une verticalité sculptée, redondance merveilleuse du mur (et non plus trouée, «fenêtre») sur quoi reposera le chassis; enfin les Nymphéas, sans horizon, sans perspective, sans rives.

Recherche picturale qui pousse la perception visuelle à une acuité telle qu'elle s'est posée en termes physiologiques à Jules Laforgue, pathologiques mêmes pour d'autres critiques contemporains de Monet, et qu'on peut se demander si cette peinture n'est pas la manifestation extrême de la révolution neuro-physiologique déclenchée, selon McLuhan, chez l'homme de la Galaxie Gutenberg. Perception qui s'interroge sur elle-même, donnant à Andrew Forge l'occasion de rappeler la traditionnelle mise en parallèle avec les théories de Bergson qu'on aimerait bien un jour voir étudiée en profondeur. Surtout – et c'est là l'intérêt plus précis de ce livre – aboutissement d'une quête qui finit par se circonscrire autour des berges d'un jardin d'eau et de fleurs parachevé durant une qua-

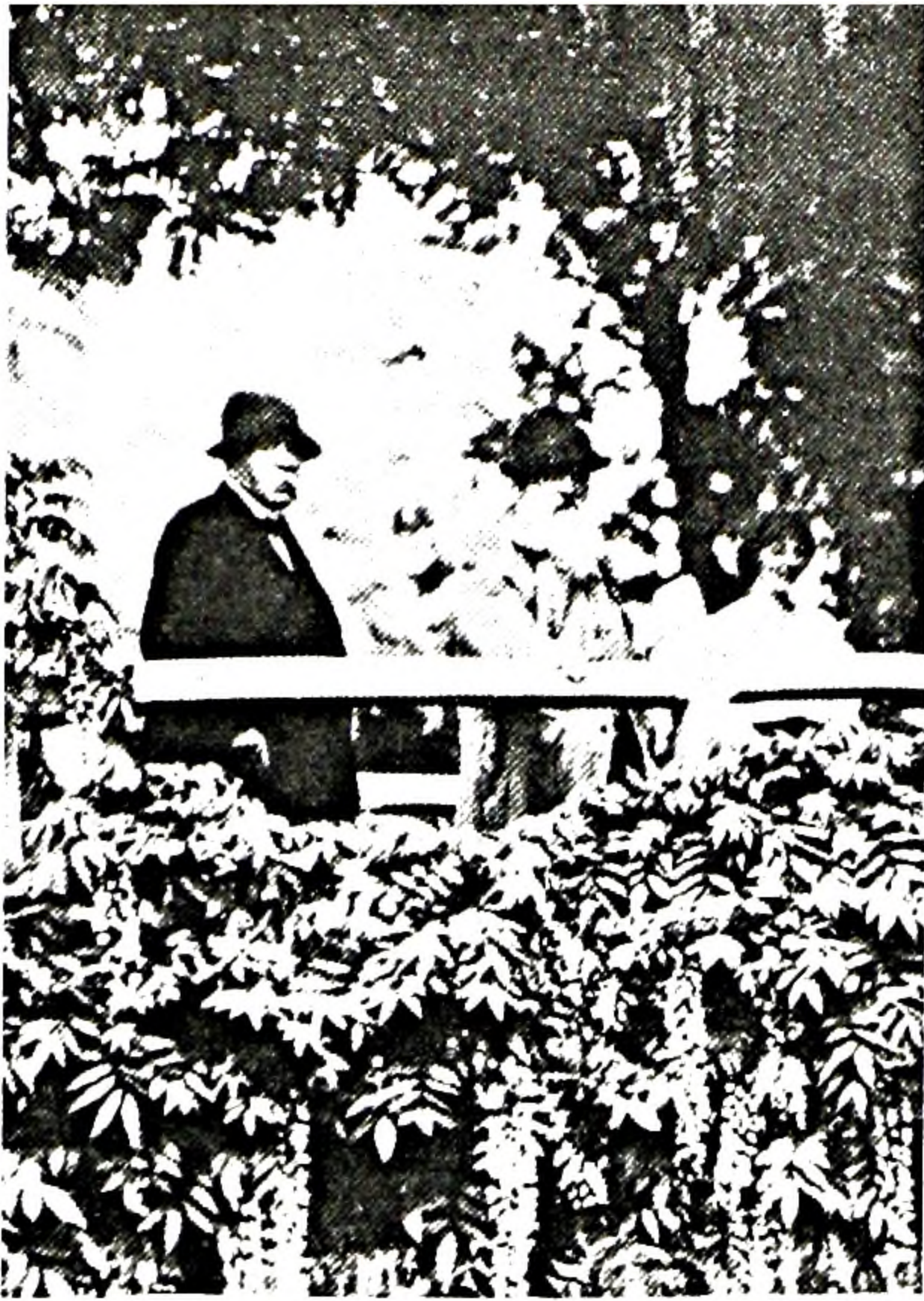


FIGURE 1. Clemenceau, Monet, et Lily Butler sur le pont japonais, 1921. Jones *et al.*, p. 104.

rantaine d'années, grâce auquel la création devient création du monde et l'art, art de vivre.

Art de vivre qui commence, Bachelard nous l'a rappelé, avec l'art d'habiter, lequel suppose qu'on porte en soi sa «poétique de l'espace» avant de partir en chasse du coin de terre où réinventer l'éden perdu. Cette chasse, Monet l'aura pratiquée systématiquement, explorant depuis «l'horrible Poissy» tous les villages de la vallée de l'Epte jusqu'à ce qu'enfin, à bout de courage, il découvre Giverny. L'emménagement a lieu le 30 avril 1883, le jour même où lui parvient la nouvelle du décès de Manet, qui le ramène à Paris pour les funérailles. Puis l'on s'installe: un potager pour manger, des fleurs pour peindre, un abri dans l'Île aux Orties à l'embouchure de l'Epte pour les quatre bateaux, et les premières réfections à la maison pour installer un atelier qui deviendra salon de rotin (voir photo pp. 88-89) quand l'annexe sera construite en 1897, comportant le second atelier et, entre autres commodités, la chambre noire pour la photographie. Plus tard, quand le projet des panneaux décoratifs sur le thème des Nymphéas est soutenu et même commandé par Clemenceau, Monet fait ériger (1914-1916) un troisième atelier, au milieu des difficultés causées par le manque de main-d'œuvre et de matériaux dû à la guerre, immense, et dont la laideur lui fait honte.

Les photographies de l'album donnent une image attachante de l'artiste dans son univers quotidien, image changeante (jardinier, gentleman, peintre, «fan» de l'automobile, patriarche, ...) marquée par trois constantes: l'originalité du style, costume et décoration intérieure; l'éternelle cigarette qui aura raison de sa santé; la pose, toujours solidement campée, jambes écartées, une main à la poche. On se fait à travers elles une idée de l'abondante collection d'estampes japonaises dont il avait lui-même dessiné l'accrochage, dans le salon mauve-bibliothèque et dans la salle à manger, sobre, d'une allure très «contemporaine» qui devait trancher avec le goût de l'époque pour l'encombrement mobilier.

Les portraits de groupe (Fig. 1) donnent une idée de la complexité du clan Monet-Hoschedé, et c'est là encore un point très intéressant: l'éclairage porté sur l'anormalité d'une telle situation morale et sociale à Giverny. À partir de deux familles brisées, celle de Monet après la mort de Camille et celle d'Alice Hoschedé après la ruine de son mari, sa fuite en Belgique et la vente de tous ses biens, tenter de reconstruire une sorte de commune familiale de huit enfants, complètement marginale pour les mœurs du temps et celles des paysans de Giverny en particulier, solidement structurée par le double respect du père et du peintre, dont la réussite sera légalisée – et compliquée – par de nombreux mariages entre les enfants et celui, finalement, de Monet et d'Alice après la mort d'Ernest Hoschedé, en 1892.

Mais on ne peut consacrer un livre d'art à Giverny sans que la vedette revienne aux jardins, répandant à profusion les fleurs stylisées par l'Art nouveau: roses, ancolies, anémones et narcisses; la liberté des lianes grimpantes, vignes vierges enfouissant les murs, glycines et cytises (voir photo p. 104); orchidées des serres chaudes; capucines envahissant les allées; plantes aquatiques: nymphéas, iris, bambous, etc. La liste est longue qui accompagne (pp. 33-35) le plan dessiné de la propriété, donnant une idée très précise de l'emplacement des bâtiments, avec la situation du jardin d'eau au-delà de la voie ferrée, le Ru, bras de l'Epte, détourné pour agrandir et paysager l'étang originel, et l'ordonnance

des parterres selon les saisons. L'art du jardinier prolonge celui du peintre et vice versa, les parterres étant arrangés comme la palette, avec une prédominance des couleurs claires et la juxtaposition de grandes masses monochromes, telle celle de l'extraordinaire allée d'iris mauves qui devient tableau en 1900 (photographie, p. 134, et reproduction d'un tableau sur le même thème, p. 67).

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SHEILA WEINER *Ajanta: Its Place in Buddhist Art*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977. 214 pp., illus., \$14.75.

Sheila Weiner's ambitious book attempts not only to deal with the problems of Ajanta alone, but also to define the broader position that the site occupied within the Indian Buddhist world. Ajanta is located in Maharashtra state, some 200 miles northeast of Bombay, and consists of about thirty artificial rock-cut excavations dedicated to Buddhism. A small number of the caves were constructed during the time of the early Christian era or perhaps earlier, while the majority of caves were founded during the fifth or perhaps sixth century AD. The present book concerns itself almost solely with the excavations belonging to the later period.

The major contributions of the book are contained in three rather lengthy chapters. In the first, 'Historical Setting,' Weiner establishes the basic scaffolding for the chronology of the later caves. Of crucial importance for this chronology is the undated Cave 16 donative inscription undertaken by King Harishena's minister. While this inscription is largely a family panegyric, the epigraph credits Harishena with the conquests of ancient 'Kuntala, Avanti, Kaliṅga, Kosala, Trikūṭa, Lāṭa and Andhra.' A copperplate inscription dated to AD 493 from Kanheri in the ancient Trikūṭa region indicates that the Traikūṭaka Dynasty was in possession of the same Trikūṭa listed in the Cave 16 inscription. Weiner has

assumed from these inscriptions that 'It seems only obvious that if the Traikūṭakas were in control of Trikūṭa in AD 493, the inscription of Cave XVI at Ajanta in which Harisena is credited with having conquered the same area could have been inscribed only after that date' (p. 31). The evidence is in no way conclusive, however, for there do not exist corroborative inscriptions suggesting Vākāṭaka Dynasty presence in either the Trikūṭa region or in any of the countries which are mentioned in the Cave 16 record. The claim of conquests should be seen rather against the normal Sanskrit courtly tradition of military boasting. Using the same evidence as Weiner, Walter Spink has erred in the opposite direction by concluding that Cave 16 must have been begun *before* AD 493, since the Trikūṭa region at that time was assumed to be no longer under the domination of the Vākāṭakas. All that can be inferred from these two records is Traikūṭaka possession of the Kanheri region in that year.

Additional problems exist with interpretations discussed in the same chapter; space here allows only one further example. The intriguing suggestion is made that the fragmentary Rāshtrakūṭa stone inscription in the forecourt of Cave 16 may belong to the Early Rāshtrakūṭas of Mānapur (and date to the 'late-fourth- or early-fifth century') and not to a much later dynasty with a similar name as B. Ch. Chhabra has suggested (p. 25). Yet there is absolutely no speculation about the extent of the Rāshtrakūṭa contribution to Cave 16 or to any other cave at the site. In reference to a nearly complete inscription of the façade of Cave 16, it may be correct to assert for a variety of historical reasons that the 'façade of Cave XXVI may be somewhat earlier than the inscription of Cave XVII' (p. 30), yet again there is no attempt to bolster this suggestion with art historical criteria or to suggest a relative dating for the two caves.

The next important chapter, 'Iconographic Developments,' offers a discussion of the innovations and developments manifested in Ajanta and related sites. For Bagh, Cave 2, it has been argued that this excavation appears to be possibly the earliest extant example in India

of a rock-cut *vihāra* with a shrine preceeded by a distinct antechamber. The 'structural prototype' for the antechamber at Bagh, here with standing Buddha images on either side, is claimed to be found at the Tepe Shutur site at Hadda, Afghanistan, said to date to the fourth century. How this single feature from distant Hadda came to influence the design of *vihāras* in the Deccan is nowhere called into question nor is the dating of the Hadda example. It seems more likely that the antechamber was developed in the Deccan *sui generis*; in this period of tremendous excavation and religious innovation, experimentation with architectural groundplans was common.

The analysis of *caitya* 19 relates the façade of the worship hall to the *stūpa* forms represented on the famous drum slabs from Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. The form of the *caitya* window at Cave 19, for example, is compared to the dome of the *stūpas* in Andhra, the balcony and canopy to the *āyaka* platform, and so forth. Disregarding what is at least a full century separating these two distinct phases of Indian art in two parts of the Deccan, this theory does not explain how the Ajanta architects were exposed to the Andhra *stūpa* relief nor why these reliefs should have been used as models. It is more reasonable to suggest that the basic shape of the *caitya* window at Cave 19 was drawn from earlier *Himayāna* worship halls in the northwest Deccan itself. The overall design of the façade and much of the imagery were probably borrowed from contemporary structures built in perishable materials. If one is to seek sources for or similarities with Ajanta one must look at the fifth- and early sixth-century world of the Guptas in central India and not to the early Andhra region.

A most significant observation in this chapter is that the Buddha in the teaching gesture (*dharmacakra*) and seated in the 'European' pose (*pralambapādāsana*) assumed a great importance at the site in its latest phase (Fig. 1). This type of image occurs as the principal figure in Caves 16, 22, and 26 and is frequently encountered among intrusive panels or niches on largely finished excavations. This new type rightly implies a religious shift from the more narrative, historical