



# The Unfinished

## The Stone Carvers at Work in the Indian Subcontinent

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**Peter Rockwell**

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The sheer number of unfinished stone monuments in India is staggering and examples appear at some of India's most famous and well-studied sites that include rock-cut Ellora, Ajanta, and Mamallapuram. Unfinished work also appears on built temples celebrated for the intricacy of their sculpted decoration, such as those in Hoysala kingdom or in Orissa. This detailed study provides an overall coverage of India's unfinished work while addressing a range of issues related to stone-carving by examining a select number of monuments at specific sites. Instead of focusing on a site in its entirety, the study here focuses on specific issues of consequence in the context of unfinished work, as they gain an added weight and significance through discovery of their repetitive occurrence at site after site.

At the heart of this book are the many varieties of unfinished stone carving that merit close observation to see what is there and what is not, and to appreciate that all the finished work has been through these various stages of being unfinished before reaching completion.

In the course of her career, **Vidya Dehejia** has combined research with teaching and exhibition-related activities around the world. Extensive field travel in South Asia, with visits to sites of importance in Southeast Asia, has given her first hand familiarity with the art of the region. Her background in classical Sanskrit and Tamil, and knowledge of a range of modern Indian languages has proved invaluable. Her writings have incorporated translations of ancient poetry, and material from unpublished manuscripts, in order to illuminate an artistic milieu. She has explored at length the theoretical basis for the portrayal of visual narratives in the context of India's sculpture and painting, and has examined issues of gender and colonialism. Over time, her work has ranged from Buddhist art of the centuries BC to the esoteric temples of North India, and from the sacred bronzes of the South to the art of British India. Management and curatorial experience at the Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries provided broader scope to convey the excitement of her field to non-specialist audiences.