

Artists and the
East India Company
1750–1850

Painters Ports and Profits

Edited by Laurel O. Peterson and Holly Shaffer

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**All plates and figures represent
works from the Yale Center for
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except where otherwise noted.**

Ellora's Living Rock

Kalyani Madhura Ramachandran

Gangaram Tambat visited the rock-cut cave complex at Ellora in 1793. He was sent by Charles Warre Malet to make illustrations for an article on the architecture of ancient caves to be published in *Asiatick Researches*.¹ However, his pictures were considered “inadequate,” and Malet commissioned James Wales to “correct his errors of delineation and perspective” for a later publication. In 1795, Gangaram accompanied Wales to Ellora, along with the Scottish artist Robert Mabon and the Goan artist known as Jossi. Over both visits, Gangaram produced a formidable corpus of investigations into ancient rock-cut architecture hewn into living rock or natural hill faces. This collection is part of Wales’s archive but has long been overlooked.

In one such meditation, Gangaram used a muted palette of gray-brown, deep-green, ash blue, and mustard yellow watercolors to depict the dry landscape at Ellora before the rains (PLATE 74). The caves appear nestled in the rugged expanse of the basalt mountainside, their architectural elements barely discernible. In the foreground is a pool fed by a diminished waterfall, depicted as faint streaks on the hillside. Another watercolor was possibly made after rainfall and appears more vivid; the application of powder blue illuminates the clear sky and still pool (PLATE 75).

For both works, Gangaram used two sheets of paper to create a panoramic effect reminiscent of a three-page aquatint of Ellora that Thomas Daniell produced in 1803 and 1804 (FIG. 4.9)—and this is not a coincidence. When Wales died after an illness at Kanheri, Malet inherited the artist’s archive. After Malet returned to England with Wales’s daughter Susanna, whom he subsequently married, he commissioned Daniell, who had never visited Ellora, to make aquatints of the site based on Wales’s drawings. These became the final volume of *Oriental Scenery*, a compendium of picturesque landscapes published from 1795 to 1807 and synonymous with the colonial vision of India.² Daniell’s Ellora aquatints are thus informed by Gangaram’s depictions, through Wales.³

Daniell’s debt to Gangaram is apparent in *The Ashes of Ravana, Interior View*, an aquatint of a dark cave with an Indian artist—probably Gangaram—sketching in the corner (PLATE 76). Wales’s notes mention that Gangaram drew sculpted panels in the interior of the rock-cut cave at Ellora known as Cave 14. Indeed, one of Gangaram’s pictures depicts a bipartite panel from the cave that shows Shiva and Parvati playing a board game in their rocky abode on Mount Kailasa (PLATE 77).



FIG. 4.9 Thomas Daniell (1749–1840) after James Wales (1747–1795), *The Mountain of Ellora*, from *Oriental Scenery*, vol. 6, London: [Robert Bowyer], 1803, etching and aquatint with watercolor, 21½ × 76½ in. (54.6 × 194.3 cm)



PLATE 74

Gangaram Chintaman Navgire Tambat
(active 1790s), *The Waterfall at Dhumar
Lena, Dry*, between 1793 and 1795
Watercolor, gouache, graphite, and pen
and black ink on two joined sheets of laid
paper with Portal and Bridges watermark
and unidentified watermark (crown and GR),
11 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 38 in. (30.2 × 96.5 cm)

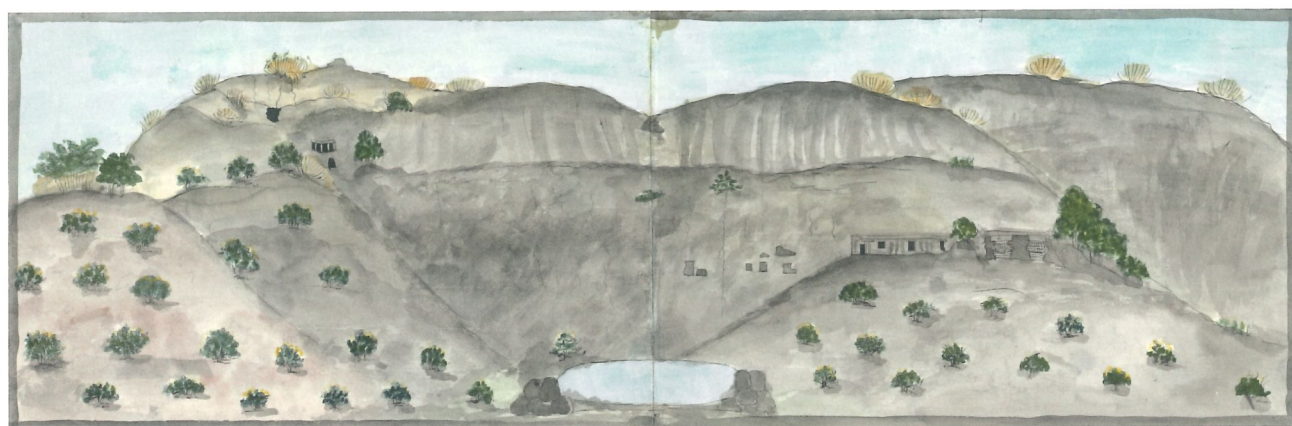


PLATE 75

Gangaram Chintaman Navgire Tambat,
*The Waterfall at Dhumar Lena, After
the Rains*, between 1793 and 1795
Watercolor, pen and black ink, and
graphite on two joined sheets of laid
paper with Whatman watermarks,
11 × 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (27.9 × 85.7 cm)



PLATE 76

Thomas Daniell after James Wales,
The Ashes of Ravana, Interior View,
 from *Oriental Scenery*, vol. 5,
 London: [Robert Bowyer], 1803
 Etching and aquatint with watercolor,
 21½ × 29 in. (54.6 × 73.7 cm)

PLATE 77

Gangaram Chintaman Navgire Tambat,
Shiva and Parvati Playing Chaupar, Relief
 Sculpture at Ellora, between 1793 and 1795
 Gray wash, pen and black ink, and graphite
 on laid paper with unidentified watermark
 (ornamented fleur-de-lys and GR),
 11¾ × 8¾ in. (28.9 × 22.2 cm)

