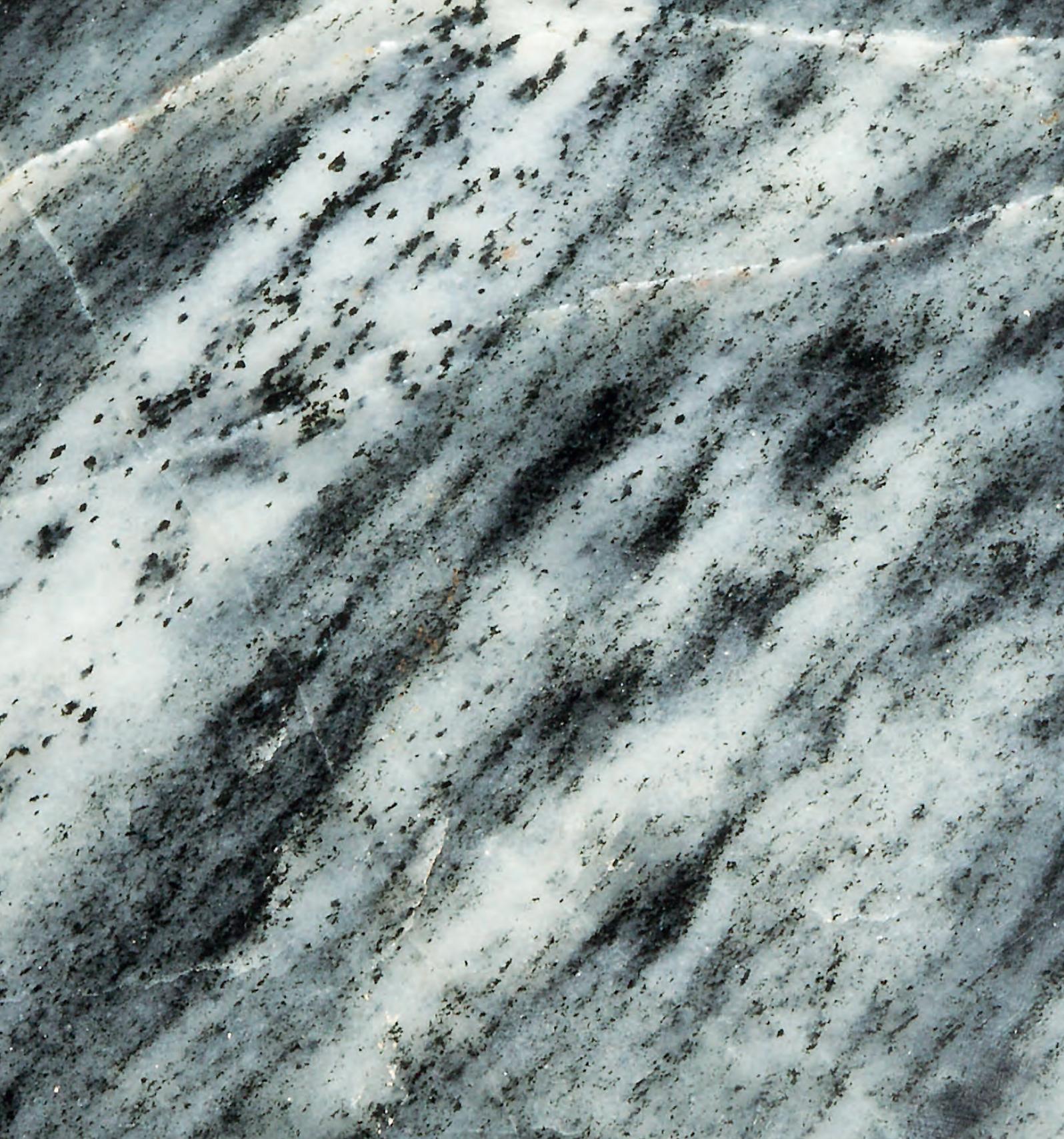


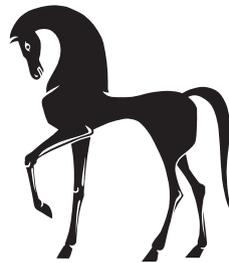


ΚΑΛΛΟΣ



STEPHEN COX RA
X
KALLOS GALLERY
ANCIENT STONE

1 October – 2 November 2018



ΚΑΛΛΟΣ

KALLOS GALLERY

CATALOGUE 4

14-16 Davies Street London W1K 3DR
Telephone +44 (0)20 7493 0806 E-mail info@kallosgallery.com

WWW.KALLOSGALLERY.COM

A collaboration inspired by the materiality of stone and featuring sculptures from antiquity alongside contemporary works by Stephen Cox RA, an artist renowned for his knowledge of ancient sculptural techniques, traditions and materials. The exhibition will include works in porphyry, marble, alabaster, breccia, gneiss, diorite and flint.

STEPHEN COX RA



The invitation to curate an exhibition at Kallos Gallery fits extremely well with my practice as a contemporary artist. Juxtaposing examples of my sculpture with ancient stone works from Kallos Gallery's collection serves to illustrate the timeless and universal nature of the language of sculpture.

Italy has been a frequent place of pilgrimage for me, but over the past 32 years my interests have also taken me to Egypt. In my 'cultural collision' with modern Egypt, I have referenced the ancient world by carving from the most exciting rocks, unused for millennia. The most wonderful was to fulfill an ambition of working with Imperial Porphyry.

A commission from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in association with the Egyptian Government to make a sculpture to stand outside the New Cairo Opera House, enabled me to take an expedition to the Imperial Porphyry quarries. The large blocks quarried were the first to be taken from Mons Porphyrities since antiquity.

INTRODUCTION

Stephen Cox engages a lithic imagination from time immemorial. None of the stones he sculpts have been quarried since antiquity. Kephren Diorite has not been cut since the Pharaoh Khafre had statues carved from it for his mortuary temple in the mid-third millennium BC.

Long before the Egyptians quarried fine stones like Hammamat Breccia to carve statues, or limestone to build pyramids, they lifted loose boulders from the desert sands from which to shape jars, platters, and amulets. The unfashioned lip of *Bowl of Khafre* preserves the rough rind of this desert floor. The endless labour of grinding and polishing these hardest of stones discloses their bewitching swirls and mottling. When these vessels were exported to Sumeria and Syria, where no such stones existed and could scarcely be imagined, glass was invented to imitate them.

“Egyptian Alabaster” (calcite-travertine), was instead soft enough to produce large vessels and unguent jars (*Ballet Shoes*), but also small statues and even chapels. A golden-hued, translucent stone that seemed to trap solar rays and luminous clouds, its quarry became known as Hatnub, “mansion of gold.” *Maquette for Cycladic Gemini* recasts this stone in the language of Greek Cycladic sculpture (c. 3000 BC) so beloved of modernists for its reduction of the human body to the most minimal forms that still express figuration.

Stephen Cox is the first artist to quarry porphyry since the fifth century AD. Known to the Egyptians, it was only exploited by the Romans, for whom it was the most exalted of stones because its colour matched Imperial Purple, the precious dye gathered from the secretions of molluscs (*Gemini Basins*). Porphyry sarcophagi ensured that those born to the purple remained steeped in it for eternity. So tough it defied any chisel, polishing gave this igneous stone from Jebel Dukhan (“Mountain of Smoke”) a surface slick of light that subverted its hardness, and its glittering phenocrysts now seemed particles in suspension. Medieval observers could not believe porphyry was natural at all, and imagined that this liquid flame had been conjured into petrifying.

FABIO BARRY (Stanford University, Department of Art and Art History)



PORPHYRY

Imperial Porphyry is an extremely rare and historically important stone. By Imperial decree, it was solely for the use of the Roman Emperors and the Imperial family. It comes from a single mountain in Egypt: *Mons Porphyrities* at Djebel Dukhan, high up in the mountains of the Eastern Desert. The sixth-century writer Paulus Silentiarius describes its use in Constantinople within Hagia Sophia, as 'Porphyry is powdered with stars.'

DIORITE

Diorite from *Mons Claudianus* was also exploited by the Romans for its 'cleavability'. This feature enabled massive columns to be produced weighing 250 tons, which would then be floated up the Nile and then on to Imperial sites such as Diocletian's Palace at Split on the Dalmatian coast or Trajan's Forum in Rome. I produced in the desert near *Mons Claudianus* a 40 ton sculpture 'Osiris' in white diorite for Stuart Lipton's Stockley Park near Heathrow.

HAMMAMAT BRECCIA

Through the director of the Geological Survey (EGSMA) I was introduced to Hammamat Breccia. The quarries of this amazing stone lie in the Wadi of Fouakir, the pass in the mountains of the road between Kuft on the Nile and Kosir on the Red Sea. This place was the location of the 'Fabled Land of Koptos' the source of the Pharaoh's gold. Here coalesced the extraction of gold and stone as testified to in the oldest geological map in the world from the time of Pepi III (Turin Museum), which delineates the sources of gold, basalt and breccia in the network of valleys in the area.

CHEPHREN DIORITE

The stone originates from a quarry in the far south of Egypt, beyond Abu Simbel. It was the source of the stone for one of the most famous sculptures of Ancient Egypt, the seated figure of Khafra, builder of the second Great Pyramid and the son of Kheops who built the first.

This quartzite/gneiss, of bluish grey streaked with black, was given the name of Chephren Diorite in reference to its use for the funerary statues of Khafra, the most famous appearing on the Egyptian £20 note. The sculptures here are the first to be fashioned in this stone for 4500 years.



1 | AN ANATOLIAN IDOL OF BEYCESULTAN TYPE

CIRCA 3200 – 2800 BC

Marble

Height: 7cm



2 | STEPHEN COX RA
MAQUETTE FOR CYCLADIC GEMINI, 2018

Alabaster
Height: 52.5 cm



3 | AN EGYPTIAN TWO-PART VESSEL

NEW KINGDOM, 18TH – 20TH DYNASTY, CIRCA 1550–1070 BC

Alabaster

Height: 32 cm



4

STEPHEN COX RA

LENS OF KHAFRE, 1995

Chephren diorite

Width: 32 cm



5 | AN EGYPTIAN BOWL

EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD, 1ST - 2ND DYNASTY, CIRCA 3000-2650 BC

Anorthosite gneiss

Diameter: 20.6 cm



6 | STEPHEN COX RA
GIFT OF KHAFRE, 1995

Chephren diorite
Length: 39.5 cm



7 | A BACTRIAN IDOL

LATE 3RD – EARLY 2ND MILLENNIUM BC

Red veined onyx

Height: 31.8 cm

8

STEPHEN COX RA

PEREGRINE: SENTINEL, 2016

Egyptian porphyry

Height: 100 cm







9 | STEPHEN COX RA
GEMINI BASINS, 2018

Egyptian porphyry
Width: 90 cm



10 | STEPHEN COX RA
BOWL OF KHAFRE, 1994

Chephren diorite
Height: 15.5 cm



11 | STEPHEN COX RA
ROMAN BOWL, 2003

Egyptian diorite
Diameter: 15 cm



12 | STEPHEN COX RA
PEREGRINE: PALMER, 2014

English basalt
Height: 36.5 cm

13 | TWO BACTRIAN RITUAL OBJECTS

LATE 3RD – EARLY 2ND MILLENNIUM BC

Black stone

Heights: 94.8 cm; 99.2 cm





14 | A ROMAN TORSO OF DIONYSUS

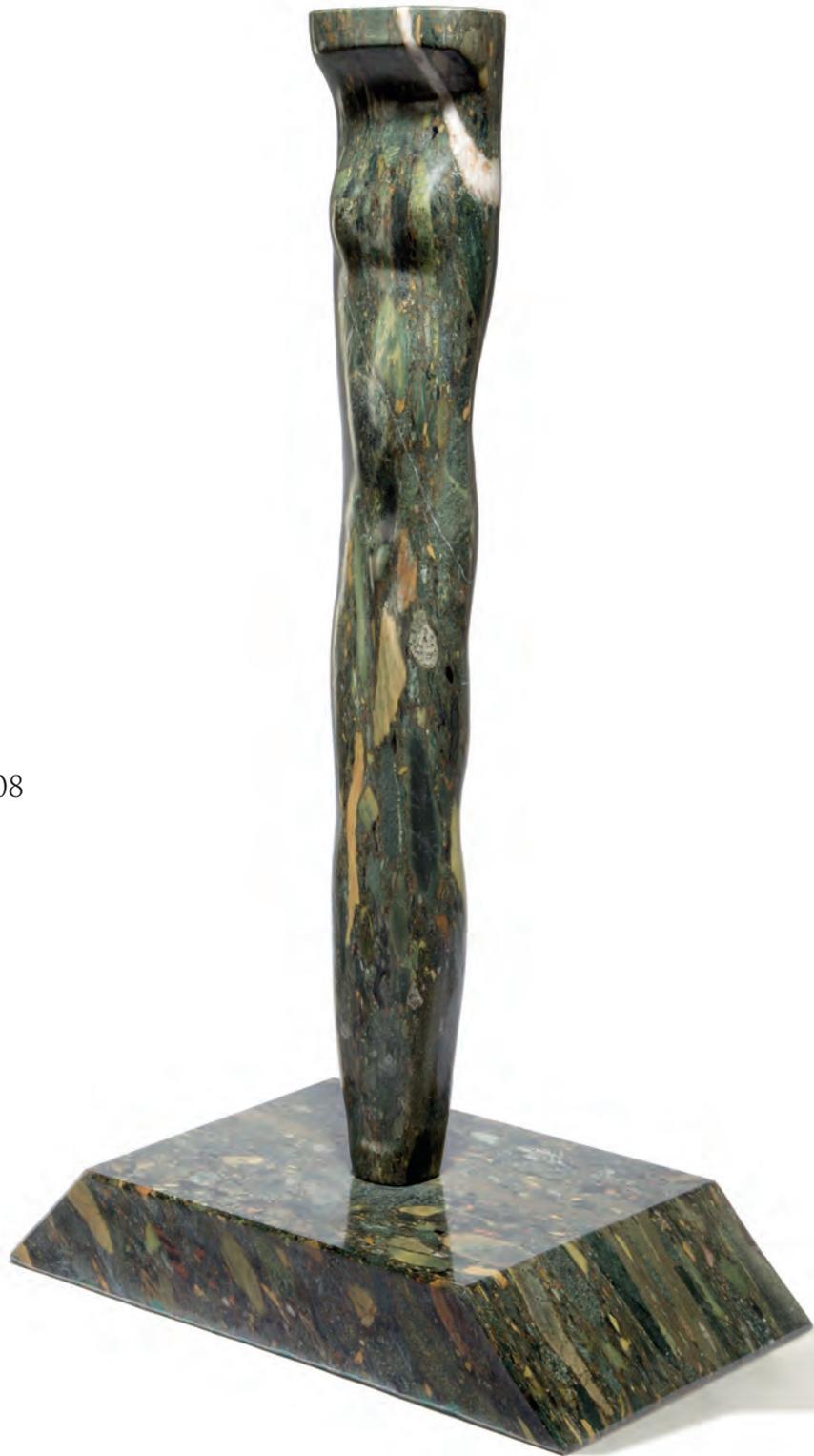
CIRCA 1ST – 2ND CENTURY AD

Marble

Height: 38.5 cm

15 | STEPHEN COX RA
FIGURE THIN, 2008

Hamamat breccia
Height: 73.5 cm





16 | STEPHEN COX RA
HERMAPHRODITE –
MAPPA MUNDI, 2002

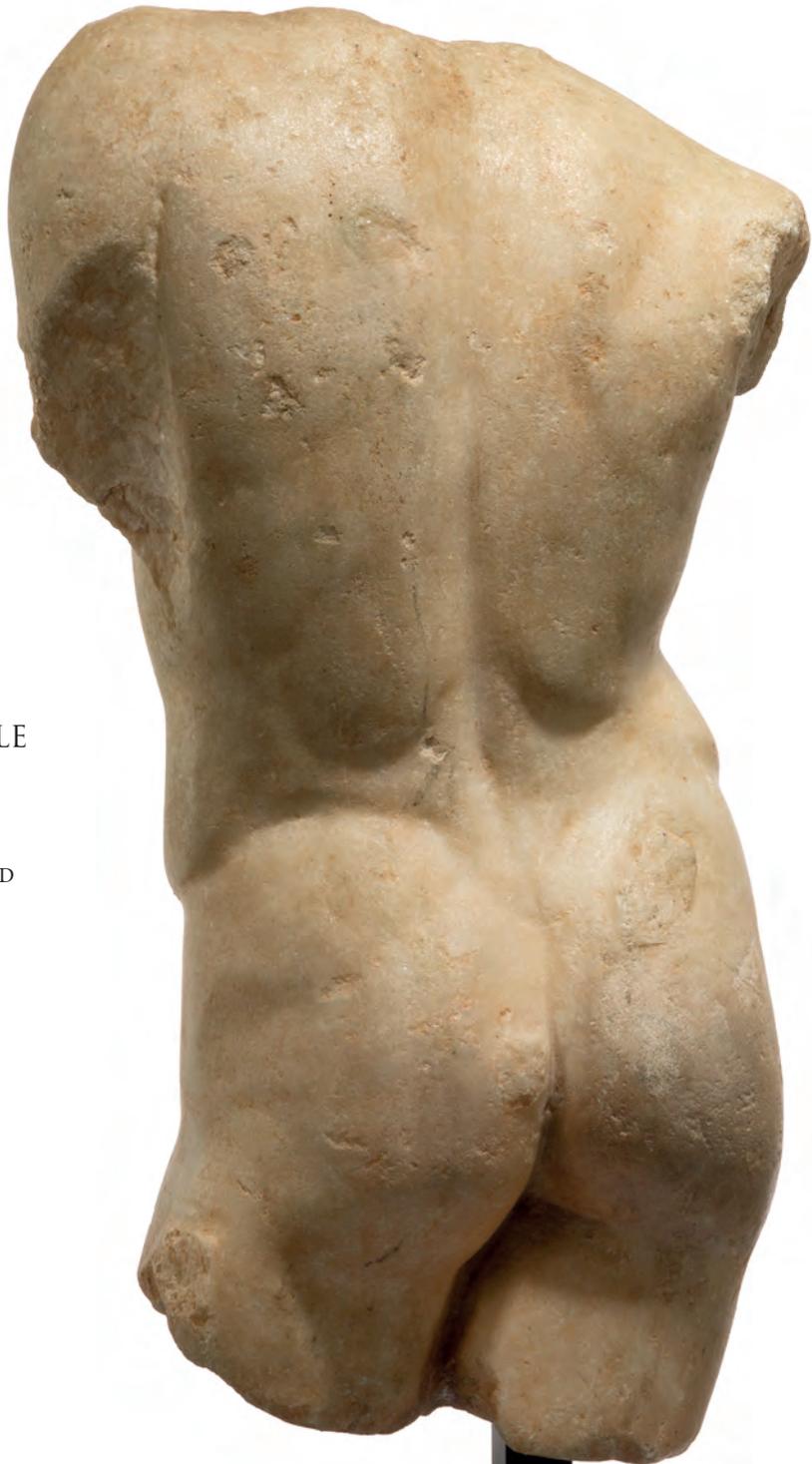
Egyptian porphyry
Height: 36.5 cm

17 | A ROMAN MARBLE
TORSO OF A
YOUNG MAN

CIRCA 1ST – 2ND CENTURY AD

Marble

Height: 52 cm





18 | A HEAD OF A BIRD OF PREY

ACHAEMENID TO SELEUCID, CIRCA 5TH – 3RD CENTURY BC

Chert

Length: 14 cm



19 | STEPHEN COX RA
LITTLE SHROUDED PEREGRINE, 2014

English basalt
Height: 18 cm



20 | STEPHEN COX RA
AMŒBÆN BOWL, 2018

Egyptian porphyry
Length: 28 cm



21 | STEPHEN COX RA
FIGURE: DEPOSITION, 2018

Egyptian porphyry
Length: 40 cm

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