

FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE EXCAVATION

The torrent that cut down through the volcanic ash, as it flowed through the prehistoric city at Akrotiri, flooded the rooms of the buildings, trapping their content in the mud. This was the picture revealed by the excavation in the east wing of Complex Delta (Δ), only a small part of which has been preserved, thanks to a dry-stone retaining wall built by the farmers in modern times.

A partition wall that separated Room D18 into two parts, south (D18a) and north (D18b), helped to keep the ceiling in place at the east edge of the room. Very close to the ceiling of Room D18b, near the SE corner, a cache of clay sealings was found. Perhaps these had been kept in some container of organic material — long-perished — which had floated upwards on the waterborne sludge.

In the present volume, Dr Artemis Karnava discusses exhaustively not only these sealings but also all the sporadic finds relating to sphragistics, recovered from the excavations at Akrotiri. With this study, another piece comes to fill in the puzzle of the history of Thera society in the Bronze Age.

As Director of the Akrotiri Excavations, I take this opportunity to congratulate Artemis on her sound scholarship and her responsible treatment of the sensitive material I entrusted to her.

Christos G. Doumas