AFTERWORD:

CREATING THE DIGITAL EDITION OF
LAST HOUSE ON THE HILL

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By creating an on-line media- and data-rich edition of *Last House on the Hill*, we hope to keep alive, and open for critique and further elaboration, the narratives about the archaeology, history, cultural heritage, and memories of the BACH project. The physical monograph, as comprehensive as it strives to be, contains a small fraction of the BACH project's primary data and media. The digital edition of *Last House on the Hill* is available as a "Cloud"-based database running on your desktop and as an iPad application, which brings together digital versions of the published texts and authors' supplemental materials along with the full archaeological record. The on-line edition does much more than provide a digital presentation framework for publishing an archaeological monograph. Its ambition, one that we have long wished to satisfy, is to embed, interweave, entangle, and otherwise link the complete project database (including all media formats such as photographs, videos, maps, line drawings) with their interpretation and meaningful presentation in an open access, sharable platform. It is an open-ended data stream that can grow and—as long as it is well curated—can live for many decades.

Distinct from the print edition of *Last House on the Hill*, the on-line edition is a digital "multigraph," as we like to call it, whereby all the original data, media, analysis, and interpretation are interlinked with the final synthetic contents held in the monograph. We wish to provide access, transparency, and open-endedness to what is normally the closed and final process of monograph publication. Our attitude to sharing our knowledge with the public is, we feel, very close to that of the Çatalhöyük team as a whole, who have made all of their data and media accessible through Creative Commons licensing, without which our task would have been much more challenging (see Foreword and Chapter 25).

The requirements for this on-line, collections-based Web-publishing platform are formidable due to the complexity and sheer mass of data and media we wish to reconcile from the paper volume itself, let alone the complete alphanumeric, video, and image collections that contain millions of records and hundreds of tables, over 15,000 images, and hundreds of video clips. Furthermore, we do not want to build merely a repository of content, but an extensible framework through which researchers, visitors, and future scholars who make up the Çatalhöyük community can all make substantive contributions. To this end, we are working with several digital libraries, publishers, and application designers to assure that the on-line edition is a framework that will be sustainable, extensible, and serve as an engaging model for the digital publication of archaeological content.

The print edition *of Last House on the Hill* is but one collective work about Çatalhöyük. There are hundreds of thousands of web pages, over 40,000 images, hundreds of videos, projects, dissertations, articles, popular books, lesson plans, and databases already out there in the World Wide Web that relate to Çatalhöyük. One of our ambitious aims for the digital edition of *Last House on the Hill* is to find a way to link up the worlds of data within our project with the disparate universes of data already on the Internet, or in researchers' laptops. An essential information management challenge for a project of this magnitude is how to make sense of such an enormity of information and rich media. We believe that the mass of archaeological documentation gains its full significance for a study of the past if it is represented as the relationships among people, actions, tasks, and the contingencies of time and space, all of which contribute to the creation of the archaeological record (a more technical description of the project may be found in Ashley et al. 2012). Narratives that represent these

relationships can be drawn out of the database through the filter of the alternating perspectives or standpoints of people, places, things, and media, thus enabling the recontextualization and remixing of the content that resides in the database. Thus, the ultimate aim of the digital edition of *Last House on the Hill* is to have both archaeologists and a broader public be inspired to explore the data and media in order to use them in creative and productive ways.

Now (2012) is a very exciting time to be embarking on such an enterprise. Just a few years ago, our ambitious goals would have been virtually impossible to achieve, given our far more modest time and financial budgets. In the age of mobile computing, iPads, and Android devices, there is an ever-increasing market pressure to provide easy-to-use and powerful tools for self-expression (publishing), coupled with robust digital asset management and archiving through "cloud" computing. We are optimistic that these market changes will continue to positively influence traditional archives and publishers to reconsider what it means to be "done" with an archaeological publication.

In the meantime, in the same spirit of so many collaborations and projects during the new excavations at Çatalhöyük, the digital edition of *Last House on the Hill* is a democratic, grassroots attempt to bring together hundreds and thousands of untold stories, media items, and data sets into a coherent, albeit loosely defined but well-curated digital retelling of the work presented in the print edition and our lives in the Berkeley Archaeologists at Çatalhöyük project. We hope you will enjoy it, and, moreover, we hope you will engage with it and us for years to come.

The website for the "Cloud"-based Last House on the Hill project is *http://www.codifi.info/projects/last-house-on-the-hill/*.

Bibliography

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