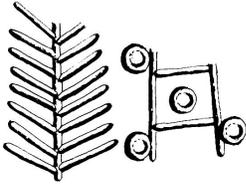


Toward an Eventful Archaeology



Douglas J. Bolender

Throughout the twentieth century, archaeology has had an uneasy relationship with history. These divisions have been particularly salient in the United States where history has been allied with the humanities, archaeology with the social sciences. At times, archaeologists have explicitly rejected a role for history within the social sciences (e.g., Binford 1962). The result has been a methodological and theoretical divide between historical and prehistoric archaeologies and the restriction of historical archaeology as a temporally and regionally specific subdiscipline (Paynter 2000). European archaeology has enjoyed a closer relationship with history but historical archaeologies—such as medieval, modern, and classical—often form their own distinct studies, separate from one another and the broad sweep of European prehistory. In both the United States and Europe, historical archaeologies often have been subordinated to research agendas dictated by history (Champion 1990).

Attempts to place historical and archaeological methods and sources on an equal footing have often looked to the *Annales* historians for inspiration. Fernand Braudel (1995) explicitly linked the program of *Annales* historians with the social sciences and Lévi-Strauss's (2000) structural anthropology. Archaeologists have found common ground in the *Annales* emphasis on long-term processes, everyday life, and material culture (Bintliff 1991; Hodder 1987; Knapp 1992; Thurston 1997). Traditionally, *Annales* historians have viewed the temporality of the event with suspicion and as an unreliable basis for a grounded social history and associated it with nineteenth-century political history and the arbitrariness of narrative form (cf. White 1973, 1987). This discomfort with the potentially accidental basis of the event, its historical contingency, and to some degree the role of personal agency in shaping society, has been largely echoed throughout the archaeological literature. With the rise of postprocessual perspectives, archaeologists have more openly embraced questions of agency, locality, and relativistic cultural trajectories. Nonetheless, the social significance

of the event—and the connection between agency and historical process—remains largely undeveloped territory within archaeology.

Recently, in Beck et al. (2007), we suggested the eventful sociology proposed by William Sewell (2005) as a framework for archaeological analysis. Sewell brings two important formulations to the notion of the event: first, a specific construction of social structure that gives material evidence an equal footing with ideas; and second, identification of the event with episodes that result in a significant reordering of social structures. It is Sewell's grounding of social structures and social transformation in the material that makes it amenable to the architectural record.

Sewell positions the concept of social structure at the core his theory of the event. Sewell's perspective can be traced to Anthony Giddens's (1979, 1984) theory of structuration and his emphasis on the dual and processual nature of social structure. This duality in structure is recursively constituted through rules and resources. For Giddens, resources do not denote actual things or people, but instead the capacity to command real things and people. Thus, structure is comprised of virtual rules and resources that are enacted in social practice and has no enduring material aspect. Instead, it derives its continuity through the operation of memory and knowledge (Giddens 1984:377). Sewell believes that this conception of social structure is problematic: If rules and resources are both virtual, how can structures be simultaneously constituted of rules and resources? And what distinguishes one from the other? Instead, Sewell reformulates Giddens's duality of structure as interplay between mental schemas and material resources. Sewell's schemas, like Giddens's rules, are virtual and can be applied in a broad range of situations. However, resources are actual and, in any instance of social action, are fixed to specificities of time and place (Sewell 2005:133). Sewell retains the recursive quality of Giddens's theory of structuration suggesting that it is the mutual implication of virtual schemas and actual resources that constitute social structures. Structures are as much a product of social practice as they are things that define practices.

Sewell considers five qualities of social structures that inevitably lead to structural change: (1) structures are multiple and (2) intersecting; (3) schemas are transposable; and (4) resources carry multiple social meanings, and (5) are unpredictable (Sewell 2005:140–143). At any given moment, social agents enact a multiplicity of structures and these structures intersect and overlap. In fact, it is the materiality of resources which provide much of the continuity to social practice. However, the intersection of structures implies that a specific resource may be socially constituted through multiple schemas or different social agents depending on the structures that he or she enacts in a particular context. While the viability of particular structures is limited by the ability of agents to reliably enact them, the multiplicity of potential structures resists the stasis of social institutions associated with structuralist approaches. This multiplicity of structures is juxtaposed with the unpredictability of the material world: a bad harvest, a late spring, an odds-defying victory at war, an epidemic, or a dynastic line that fails to produce an heir.

It is within this formulation of social structure that Sewell situates the event. Following the lead of Marshall Sahlins (e.g., 1981, 1985, 1991, 1995), he distinguishes the event as “sequences of occurrences that result in transformations of structures” (Sewell 2005:227) from happenings, which simply reproduce existing social structures without significant

change. For a sequence of occurrences to take on the significance of an event it must cascade across multiple structural domains and result in durable ruptures between resources and schemas that threaten the integrity of the structural network; for example, the difference between a worker calling in sick and a sustained strike or a single bad harvest versus a multiyear drought. Structural disjunctions occur when the schemas once used to mobilize an array of resources lose their capacity to reliably order the world. The social disarray engendered during episodes of disjunction cannot be tolerated for significant periods of time and the failure of previously reliable structures opens the opportunity for novel articulations of schemas and resources that may not have been possible in the previous order.

Thus, Sewell's social event occurs in three stages: (1) a series of context-dependent occurrences produce (2) a cascade of disarticulations between previously reliable resources and schemas, finally resulting in (3) the opportunity—and necessity—for novel rearticulations of social structure. While structural disjunction sets the stage for novel practices, the event itself is bound to those innovations that effectively resolve the discontinuities between schemas and resources. The success of these specific cultural innovations is indicated in their replication and institutionalization in social practice. It is this aspect of Sewell's event that most distinguishes it from the capricious event of traditional history and establishes it within the framework of the social sciences. Events are historically contingent and produce novelty but in their resolution they are constrained by the social efficacy of the rearticulations they produce. This emphasis on the transformative significance of the event is not a rejection of the traditional *Annales* attention to the *longue durée*. The slow accumulation of innovation and change inherent in the multiplicity of structures potentially enacted in any given circumstance can stress the articulations of schemas and resources and set the stage of an event. According to Sewell, it is in these eventful ruptures that those discontinuities are manifest and subject to reformulation. The event becomes the mechanism for structural change. Are historical transformations always eventful? Sewell seems to suggest that they are. Changes in practices accumulate, stressing existing structural patterns, but the structures themselves endure until they are transformed through the process of rupture and rearticulation. The relationship between specific events and other temporalities of change are an open, and empirical, question. Using Sewell's scheme, all social transformations are eventful—as defined by a transformation of structural relationships between material resources and organizing schema—but these eventful transformations may not always occur within the temporally restrictive cascade of ruptures that constitute a particular historical event. These accumulated changes may have implications for the next big rupture but retain a social reality beyond that event and may not be simply latent potentials waiting the next event to come along.

It is Sewell's emphasis on the materiality of resources, and their recursive constitution of structure in conjunction with schemas, that opens his eventful history to archaeological interrogation. The disjunction and rearticulation of structures through the course of an event imply novel constellations of resources—the kind of patterned shifts that should be visible in the archaeological record as material resources take on new meanings or positions in structural rearticulation. Sewell's eventful perspective provides a historical approach to social transformation that allows archaeologists to work independently or in complement to historical sources and sets the archaeological record on an equal footing with history.

Why Sewell, events, and archaeology? I think the answer to this is remarkably simple. First, if we take the idea of the event seriously—and I think we must if we take the idea of agency seriously—then events are an inevitable and necessary aspect of social reproduction and transformation. Simply put, they are part of the archaeological record we are attempting to understand. Sewell lays out a conception of the event that potentially is amenable to an archaeological or material context and presents a fairly comprehensive program of the event and its relation to historical process. And, most importantly, I think it is possible, using his framework, to avoid limiting an eventful analysis to moments of historically recorded events. Many of the contributors to this volume look beyond Sewell and develop other, and important, ways of thinking about social and transformative events in the archaeological record.

HISTORICAL EVENTS VERSUS EVENTFUL ARCHAEOLOGY

While Sewell's approach was developed explicitly to address the stochastic and temporally short unfolding of historical events, this volume distinguishes between an archaeology of events—the specific transformative historical moments—and an eventful approach to the archaeological record. Sewell (2005:124) points to this distinction in his own discussion of structure as a noun that always implies the transitive verb of structuring. Something structures something else, therefore structures are inherently relational. I would suggest a similar difference between the event and an eventful analysis. Events always occur in the past tense and are an artifact of a historical analysis; we draw the boundaries of what constitutes an event versus what does not (this is not to say that the distinction is unreal or arbitrary). Alternatively, an eventful perspective is primarily concerned with the dynamics of social reproduction and change rather than the identification of transformative events in the archaeological record.

The spatial scale, temporality, and durability of an event are determined by our analytical scope. Marriages, births, and deaths are all eventful occurrences for individuals (by Sewell's standards as moments that entail significant rearrangements of schemas/resources). From the perspective of affected individuals, households, or other localized social institutions these occurrences may indeed be events resulting in fundamental reorganizations of social practices and experience. From a broader perspective these occurrences may simply represent the temporal expression of highly durable social structures and practices: individual transformations that reproduce enduring social patterns. Sewell reserves the term *event* for major structural transformations but this is an arbitrary distinction, one based in the "whole society" as the historical subject. Sewell's distinction, arbitrary as it may be, has the value of not overly diluting the significance of a social event but there is no reason that an eventful perspective cannot be extended to these localized transformations.

I think that we must understand these ongoing processes of social reproduction as eventful in order to fully grasp the nature of the significant alterations in these practices that constitute an "event." This is especially important in the archaeological context where we often extrapolate from a relatively small number of examples to society in general. It is

important that we do not contrast the event with stasis but rather see an event as a meaningfully bounded temporal and spatial alteration in social practices. This difference between the event and the eventful is aptly described by de Certeau in his description of the rupture between the historian in the archive and the historian as contemporary agent:

[F]or the moment they detach themselves from the monumental studies that will place them among their peers, and walking out into the street, they ask, "What in God's name is this business? What about the bizarre relation I am keeping with current society and, through the intermediary of my technical activities, with death?" (Certeau 1988:56)

De Certeau illustrates a fundamental schism that separates the historian and the historical operation from the reality of social process; the problem of historical retrospection. There is another aspect of de Certeau's historiography that I find useful in conceptualizing an eventful archaeology. He suggests that the process of history is best revealed at the boundaries, the edges of social practice, where we see rupture, lack of continuity, contradiction, and rebellion. This strategy also is found in many of Foucault's (e.g., 1973, 1994, 1995) works in which he situates his historical analyses on the social peripheries where the masks of ideological conformity break down and that which is assumed and naturalized is exposed as constructed and political. These are the places where we can see beyond the façade of monolithic social structure and into the inner workings of structures and practices that do not always conform to those broader outlines. Can we take this idea of social process exposed in the boundaries and apply it to the historical event?

The event represents the social boundary *par excellence*, one that is generalizable to any circumstance, because change always exposes the failure of a strict social reproduction. This is the most basic social boundary, and in creating a rupture in society not only does it change society but it always leaves a hole in history where we, too, can peer in and see the workings beneath the naturalized appearance of social process; to understand social change we must be able to see the diversity of practices, the lack of conformity, that characterize the complexity of real life and historical process.

Another concern is the arbitrary (or totalizing) designation of an eventful episode—that we characterize an entire historical moment as being eventful or (by default) not. We create, and rift from context, the temporal and social boundaries that fall within its purview. As with any subject that we isolate from context, we must take care to define and delimit not just what is included within the eventful umbrella but also what is left out, and ideally, point to the connections and relationships between the two. This was a part—often neglected—of the *Annaliste* project: the integration of temporalities. But temporalities cannot be integrated in or of themselves; they must be populated with people and occurrences.

As Bintliff notes (this volume) one of the principal strengths of the *Annales* approach is that it does not predetermine the relevant temporality for any particular historical analysis. While an eventful perspective resists the tendency to divide time into discrete blocks or periods there is a risk in beginning an analysis with a particular event, especially in the archaeological record where the identification of a transformative event is more likely to be one of the products of interpretation than the beginning point. Beginning with events in the archaeological record leads to the unavoidable problem of predetermining the field of

analysis—and the possible chasing of chimera (Grattan this volume). At any rate, the cataloging of historical events is a hollow exercise as an end in or of itself.

An eventful analysis must deal with other temporalities as sudden or radical social transformations can only be identified and understood within the broader context of social trajectories and continuities. So, while an event may characterize a particular temporality of social change, an eventful analysis must comprise multiple temporal scales. Social transformations are never monolithic, excepting the exceedingly rare circumstances in which particular cultures disappear, utterly collapse, or are somehow completely subsumed within other social traditions. In almost all cases of eventful change only some subset of social practices and institutions (*structures*) will completely disappear, only some truly novel structures will appear. The effects of structural rupture and novel rearticulation may certainly cascade through many social domains and practices coloring structures with the affects of the event but these kinds of changes may be part of other temporalities and modes of social transformation as well. To identify and understand eventful transformations one must also identify and understand continuities. As Revell points out (this volume), “[T]he challenge then becomes that rather than a return to single narrative of events with uniform outcomes, we need to allow for a more complex interweaving of event and change.” This includes recognition that the salience of past events is determined in large part by our analytical and interpretative focus. Particular moments in history may be more or less eventful depending on our emphasis on, for example, political, religious, or gender-oriented analyses and narratives.

The tendency to separate history into events and process is perhaps misplaced, as we always draw the temporal and social subjective boundaries of the event in an arbitrary manner—one aspect of society may indeed experience ruptures that constitute an eventful episode but this does not mean that all of society is eventful in that moment. While at first glance this appears to undermine the significance of the event and an eventful perspective I believe that this actually strengthens it: the whole point of the event is to separate analytically the concatenation of changing structures from a singular social structure or historical subject, both synchronically and diachronically.

AN EVENTFUL ANALYSIS AS A RELATIONAL ANALYSIS

The temporal resolution of the event creates an inherent problem in archaeological contexts. While the archaeological record is rife with the occurrences of a day or an isolated moment it is nearly impossible, in any archaeological context, historical or prehistorical, to order these occurrences into the sequential resolution that Sewell (1996) employs in his analysis of the taking of the Bastille or the events that Sahlins (1981) describes around Captain Cook’s transformation in the Hawai’ian islands. The question of the temporal resolution of the event is a very real one in the archaeological record. Whittle et al. (this volume) explore the potential of advances in radiocarbon databases and statistical processing to narrow archaeological time frames, but we are still a long way from the short-term temporalities of the traditional historical event.

Archaeology is unlikely to ever attain the temporal resolution required to expose the unfolding sequences of actions that make up an event. This is implicit in the nature of

events; by definition, ruptures in the articulation between resource and schema do not result in enduring material residues, although the disruptions themselves may be evident. In this sense, an eventful archaeology will never be an archaeology of the inside of events themselves. Instead events are visible in the transformations they produce, the transition from one set of practices, and concordant material residues, and another. Instead an eventful perspective resituates the problem of temporal resolution as a question of identifying structural relationships and their transformation. Massive social transformations may be evident without a detailed analysis of existing social relationships before and after an event. The introduction of new social structures is probably a good example of these kinds of social transformations, for example, the first appearance of state institutions or religious conversions. In these cases novelty may serve as sufficient to mark change but in many cases events will not involve the introduction of entirely new social practices or institutions but rather transformations of existing relationships. A successful eventful archaeology must employ a large number of cultural domains of activity and practices in the archaeological record and understand their changing articulations.

As many contributors to this volume note, an eventful approach requires that we are as sensitive to what does not change as what does. Events can only be understood in the context of continuities. Likewise, Matthews (this volume) draws our attention to the inverse of events, “non-events,” in which structure overwhelms agency in contexts where change is evident in the historical record or even in the experience of people and yet this apparent change, or radical rupture, masks underlying continuities. These “non-events” may still be highly eventful in the sense that new schemas may be introduced—in Matthew’s example the notion of “freedom” and its connection to new notions of individuality, respectability, and the organization of labor relations—while perpetuating fundamental inequalities within society. In other words, instances in which structural innovations produce and reinforce social continuities.

THE TEMPORALITY OF THE EVENT FROM A MATERIAL PERSPECTIVE

Sewell provides a framework for archaeologists to enter the event as a material process. He is not the first to emphasize the role of the material in creating and stabilizing the social (e.g., Bourdieu 1977; Gieryn 2000, 2002; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1989). Archaeology has always had a prominent place for space as a constitutive force in the social—the prominence of sites, monumentality, settlement pattern analysis, catchment analysis, phenomenological approaches, labor, etc.—if at times an underdeveloped analysis of how exactly these spatial and material practices constitute the social. Addressing the materiality of social events has implications for the temporality of events.

There is a tendency found in Giddens, Sahlins, and, despite his explicitly material conception of social structure, Sewell to reduce the material to the product of the mental. The material and spatial often are portrayed as the backdrop upon which the actions of historical agency unfolds instead of as a fully constitutive aspect of social production and reproduction and therefore of history itself. Giddens does stress a regionalism to social structure and practice but this largely replicates formal processual conceptions of space and

time as abstract axes upon which social phenomena (material and virtual) are mapped and clustered (categorized in temporal-spatial assemblages) (Giddens 1984). Materiality is not merely the form of an object or idea, it is constitutive of it. This is a serious problem for any archaeologically or materially oriented analysis of history and leads to the question of what a material or archaeological perspective on the event really looks like.

Following Soja (1989) and others, an eventful perspective can forefront the degree to which the material constrains the virtual. The fixed spatial and temporal materiality of objects, social agents, and social interaction (*place*) in fact provides both context and constraints on social practice and transformation without relying on notions of superstructure (ideology) or an overly cognitive notion of culture to maintain social structures and practices. The spatial-material context of social practice greatly reduces the range of practical options for social agents. Aldred and Lucas (this volume) in their analysis of medieval Icelandic landscapes call attention to this continued material resilience of past practices, and their role in shaping future practices.

Shifting the focus from the material forming the background for eventful action to the material constituting eventful action has significant implications for the temporality of events themselves. If we take the materiality of eventful transformations seriously we must also question the designation of these narrow temporal periods with the domain of the event. In his analysis of the taking of the Bastille, Sewell (1996) implies a number of structural ruptures and rearticulations of schema and resource that occur in the short days spanning the period between the outbreak of violence and its political resolution. To what degree are these new relations of ideas and things real at the end of this sequence of events?

The reshuffling of ideas is fluid and rapid but they can just as rapidly fall apart. The fragile political resolution of the Bastille could easily have been reversed or repressed in coming weeks or years demoting the significance of that event in historical memory and consequence. To the degree that an event results in a transformation of structures it must be realized in new patterns of practice (new structures, including the material aspects of these structures) and not simply in the implication of these structures. One of the benefits of Sewell's conception of a dual virtual-actual social structure is that it relieves memory and habit from shouldering the burden of cultural reproduction through a shared reliance on the spatial and material. The transformation of structures becomes real as it results in new articulations of material and spatial practice, not simply new ways of thinking. One consequence for the event is that while the ruptures and rearticulations that characterize an event may occur over a relatively short time period (traditional *Annales l'histoire événementielle*) they are not actual until these new ideas have become manifest in social practice, including the creation and allocation of existing or new actual resources. New ways of doing things require time and space to come into being. The consequences of new potential structures become more real as they permeate the world and more and more aspects of social production become tied to them.

Gavin Lucas (2008) has recently highlighted the issue of the reversibility of an archaeological event as a significant quality affecting its representation in the archaeological record. With some caveats, I think that we can provisionally apply this test to the significance of events in history. Those that result in embedded structures are less reversible. In other words, events are transformative only to the extent that they result in real changes in

structured practice. The rupture, as Sewell says, is a moment of potential but it is not the change. The change is found in the practices that replace previous structures and that follow the event itself. From a material perspective this results in an inevitable blurring of the short-term with processes taking place over a longer time scale (in *Annales* terms, still much shorter than *la longue durée*: a conflation of *l'histoire événementielle* and *la moyenne durée*). The upshot of this blurring is that when we think about an event as including the actual practice of new social structures in time and space the gap between the temporality of the event and that of the archaeological record may not be quite so insurmountable.

ALTERNATIVE HISTORIES

An eventful archaeology has the potential to open alternative perspectives on what constitute transformative events. When we take on a concept such as the event that is grounded in historical scholarship we run the inevitable risk of conceptualizing events based on the textually based priorities of traditional history and social analysis. An eventful archaeology should not be a watered-down version of traditional history.

Contributions to this volume explore the possibility of an eventful approach to deep historical time periods, those without textual sources and in time periods with limited chronological resolution (see Audouze and Valentin, Diaz-del-Rio, Boric, Whittle, Bayliss, and Healy, and Arnold). These contexts present very real hurdles for eventful approaches. At the same time the use of historical texts creates its own problems. The potential of historical texts to reveal actor's motivations and a high degree of temporal resolution in the unfolding of events and social process in general can easily result in the privileging of the mental over the material (the role of schema over resource, in Sewell's terminology).

There are two principal ways in which an eventful archaeology can challenge the priorities of textually based history and social sciences. One is simply to challenge the salience of certain events in historical narratives. The second is to challenge priorities of historical process that are rooted in contemporary social theory that rarely give equal weight to the material aspects of social life. In the broadest sense, an eventful archaeology has the potential to challenge a social and historical theoretical perspective based in the modern, Western nation-state.

Historical narratives, especially those of "historical events" can also obscure the eventfulness of the past. The allure of the event, in Revell's turn of phrase, goes beyond the problem of historical representation to include biases in analysis. In this sense, an eventful archaeology can challenge event-oriented historical narratives. Revell (this volume) questions the importance of Roman narratives about the provinces to actual provincial social practice and events. This extends to our interpretation of archaeological contexts in historically known cultures in the absence of specific historical narratives. Ancient historical sources are far from complete and it is easy to interpolate from limited and one-sided histories and make connections between purported historical circumstances or events and social transformations. These far from complete accounts can draw us into making associations with what ancient historians found salient or worth recording and reinforce a tendency to place historically narrated events in the forefront of our own historical imaginations. Alternatively, Taylor's

discussion (this volume) of Amazons reveals how the appearance of timelessness in historical narrative subverts the eventfulness of the Amazonian phenomenon.

Allison (this volume) explores perhaps the most iconic of archaeological events, the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79. She contends that the dramatic nature of their destruction and preservation has tended to obscure the contingent, particular, and eventful histories of these places as they have instead been reconstructed as generic examples of “Roman life.” Does the archaeological focus on the moment of Pompeii’s destruction, so catastrophically eventful for the residents of the lost cities, mask the continuities in the broader region? Similarly, Grattan (this volume) focuses attention on the spurious association between natural disasters, catastrophes, and social transformation. While we should not ignore the potential impacts of environmental change—especially in our contemporary world—or natural disaster as a social stress or catalyst for change—events should not be reduced to the environment or external forces. Grattan rightly cautions against looking to the environmental record for correlations with social phenomena as a source of explanation or causality.

THE QUESTION OF DIFFERING HISTORICAL TEMPORALITIES THROUGHOUT HUMAN HISTORY

Many modern scholars have suggested that there is something unique in the modern world that makes it different from past or contemporary non-Western societies. At the heart of this difference is some specific Western social institution (e.g., capitalism, world systems, the nation-state) which is seen as so deeply ingrained throughout the spectrum of social structures that it alters the way that modern society functions in ways that make it incomparable to other societies (e.g., Giddens 1984; Polanyi 1957; Wallerstein 1974). This notion of a uniquely modern social world and historical operation is found in many of the nineteenth-century social histories that lay at the foundation of twentieth-century sociology and social history. To what degree are these sentiments empirical (all of these scholars rather explicitly deny any real knowledge of the premodern world, so upon what comparative basis do they make this claim)?

For Marx and Engels (1998), the capitalist world is not just different in terms of structures but in terms of historical operation: change is necessary, constant, and faster than in other social modes. It is a less certain world of constant disruption, of structural instability (here to support the underlying superstructure of capitalism—although in their teleology capitalism is ultimately unstable as well). States may even orchestrate disruptive events to advance political or economic agendas (Klein 2007).

The state and the bureaucratic technologies of centralization, integration, and communication that extend the spatial (and therefore societal) reach of events have implications for an archaeology of the event in premodern (or non-state) settings. Events are situated in space and inherently have sites of localized action. The degree and extent to which these localized occurrences impact social structures has a great deal to do with social integration. The state—or any politically integrative institution—has the capacity to translate local occurrences into social events that have effects far beyond the locality in which they unfold.

How should we expect events to be different in terms of scale, temporality, and types of social structures affected? I see little reason why pre-state societies should not be eventful or have events but we should be sensitive to potential differences in the operation of historical events in different social settings. The modern world is a highly integrated world with a multiplicity of structures and dependencies entangling every aspect of human life across the globe. Does this really change the mode and temporality of historical process—not just the structures and societies that constitute a moment in history, but the operation of history itself?

If we push an eventful perspective back far enough into human history we raise the question of when history becomes eventful. Or really when and what is the origin of human history? Audouze and Valentin (this volume) do exactly that in asking if it is possible to do an eventful archaeology of the Upper Paleolithic and if so, what would it look like? In this, they see a prominent place for the environment as a link between localized and weakly integrated groups. This draws attention to the connection between microhistory and event. An eventful perspective has inherent similarities to microhistory (Boric this volume) but where microhistory may be representative of broader historical trends, the event is seen as playing a transformative role in history.

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