

# MEASURED STEPS IN ARCHAEOLOGY— ONE YOUNG STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

July 26, 2013 Palatine East Pottery Project Day of Archaeology 2013, Finds American Academy in Rome, Palatine East, Rome



*Angus Leydic (R) (Duquesne University) helps Jen Black (L) (UC-Berkeley) measure a Roman pot.*

Long hours, data entry, and cataloging seem to be examples heard in various jobs and internships, but not what people would exactly think of archaeology. When telling friends that I would be working with Palatine East Pottery Project in Rome for the summer, people asked me whether I was going to dig for pottery, or find something that could change the world. My only answer I could give to them was, “the dig was completed in the 90’s; I don’t suppose anything I touch hasn’t been examined already.” That statement held some truth, but didn’t exactly become a rule.

Working at the American Academy in Rome has taught me a lot about pottery, ranging from types, materials, organization and even more critical thinking. Although working on pottery originating from Spain found on the Palatine doesn’t seem like the work my family and friends thought I would be doing, it appeared I was just checking on data collected around ten years ago. But, when I was working with Gallic pottery from France found here, my colleague and I, two students with no background in Roman pottery, were organizing, examining, and working with works of art that have yet to be touched other than to remove them from the site and store them according to context groups.

This life isn’t glamorous, but it is exciting. The team I work with, two graduate students, one from Duquesne University, my university, and another from UC Berkeley, and a professor of archaeology from UNC Chapel Hill, all work together every day to reach a common goal, to examine transport amphorae to determine origin, make, material, use, and importance in the world. The discoveries we can make might not change the world (or will they?!), but they can be useful in finding a better understanding of ancient trade, class, or maybe other subjects too.

The daily work of sorting, measuring, using Munsell’s color system, classifying and the endless spreadsheets might come off boring and underwhelming compared to finding dinosaur bones, but there is never a time that has been dull. Every discovery from graffiti, dipinti, and even guessing what happened to a sherd in the past makes all the work worthwhile. For the time I have spent working in this field, the time has been more than enjoyable, entertaining and interesting. As time nears to an end for this season my only wish is that I had more time to measure!

Ciao! -Angus