What's in a Name:

Autobiographical Memory and Identity in the Erotic Graffiti of Roman Pompeii

The purpose of this project is to understand socio-cultural constructions of memory and identity among non-elite Romans via the authorship of graffiti within the urban landscape. Building on scholarship of Kristina Milnor, Sarah Levin-Richardson, and Peter Keegan, I analyze self-referential erotic graffiti in the *Lupanar* brothel at Pompeii within the cognitive methodology of autobiographical memory. The autobiographical memory model assigns particular significance to certain events and interactions, re-telling individual stories within a socio-cultural framework (Fivush-2013). My project relies on nuances of text, archaeology, and social histories to investigate these questions. Briefly, my method involves identifying self-referential attributes among *Lupanar* graffiti: names, personas, *(*such as *pedico:* ass-fucker) and boasts. Upon identification, I then analyze the placement and location of these inscriptions within the brothel's physical landscape. My poster will include five inscriptions from my study, translated from Latin to English. Additionally, I will discuss (and include images of) architectural details of room f, the most graffiti-dense *cella* in the brothel, and the physical placement of graffiti inscriptions within the space. I will include definitions of terms where relevant, as well as paragraph summaries of my methods and conclusions. My poster presentation will conclude that the use of self-identifying language in graffiti inscriptions formulates both personal and socio-cultural narratives, in which the graffiti author situates themselves. The construction of these narratives for non-elite people, lacking access to manubial temples, expensive epigraphic dedications, and statuary, creates a memory of the self which maintains unique permanence.

Bibliography

Fivush, R. (2013). Autobiographical Memory. In Keightly, E., & Pickering, M (Ed.), *Research Methods for Memory Studies.* 13-28. Edinburgh University Press.