

Fig. 27. Casa di Cerere. Sampling areas and colour code.

I 9, 13 Casa di Cerere

“*Casa di Cerere. An extensive episode of 2nd style decoration is found in all rooms surrounding the atrium. A later episode of 3rd style (?) in the tablinum should be placed in relation to the 2nd style elsewhere, to the garden painting on the stub of wall in garden 12, and to the 4th style (?) in room 14.*”

Plasters and phases

A fragment of a wall painting, belonging to the original construction period of the house, is concealed behind the 2nd style decoration in room 6. Unpainted plaster of this early period was found in the atrium area, covered by the 2nd style decorations that still remain. Some rooms were redecorated during the period of the 3rd style. One area that still has the decoration preserved is the low garden wall in room 12. The decorations in rooms 9 and 14 belong to the last decoration period in the house.

Different kinds of plaster had been used for the 2nd style decorations in this house. In rooms 10, 11 and 12, and on the west wall in the atrium, there is a large-grained plaster that belongs to group B, related to late 1st style decorations in, e.g. those in the Casa del Bell’Impluvio. The plaster used in rooms 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 has finer grains and a different kind of filler. It belongs to group C, known from 2nd style paintings in other houses of this *insula*, and at the Temple of Jupiter. The distribution of plaster types in these areas indicates that the west side was the first to be decorated, or that a leftover of earlier filler was used for this plaster. The fine-grained plaster, C, was used for the decorations in the rooms at the southern part of the house. It was also used for the decorations in the atrium (except for the west wall) and in the *tablinum*, now concealed by a later phase.

Plasters and styles

This lovely little house is situated at the southern part of the *insula*, has been characterised as an “*esempio canonico di una casa del II – I secolo a. C.*”. The main entrance at the Via di Castricio is now closed by a plaster cast of the door, and access is through the back door at the little lane west of the *insula*. Graffiti have been registered on the walls.¹ The 2nd style paintings that adorn many of the rooms are considered to be identical to those without figure motifs in Villa dei Misteri.² An important study of this house and its decoration was made by de Vos, who identified the decorations chronologically, considering those in rooms 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11 as belonging to the first phase of the 2nd style, and the decoration in the *tablinum* as early 3rd or the candelabrum style.³ The paintings in the garden area are more generically defined as 3rd style.⁴ Ehrhardt is also of the opinion that the *tablinum* decoration is an example of the candelabrum style, dating it to the second half of the 1st century BC.⁵

Lately, Richardson has suggested that the landscape paintings in the garden area should be attributed to the so called *Boscotrecase painter* and is considered to be a good example of his early manner.⁶

¹ Della Corte 1956, 341f.

² La Rocca & de Vos 2002, 228.

³ De Vos, 1976.

⁴ Bragantini et al 1981, 105f.

⁵ Ehrhardt 1987, 52.

⁶ Richardson 2000, 41.



Fig. 28. Casa di Cerere, room 11, south wall. Detail.

The results of this plaster investigation indicate two phases of the early 2nd style. The earliest plaster, B, is found in rooms 2 (west wall), 10, 11 and the south wall in room 12, and the second plaster type, C, in rooms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9. The garden painting is contemporaneous with the 3rd style paintings in Casa del Frutteto, plaster of type E. The *tablinum* decoration is later, contemporaneous with the decoration in room 14. Plaster type F was not found in any other building in *insula* I 9, but at the Forum, e.g. on the south exterior wall of the edifice of Eumachia. This plaster type F, may be late 3rd or early 4th style. Plasters E and F do not appear in relative stratigraphic order in the Casa di Cerere.

Discussion and concluding remarks

There is no relative stratigraphic order between plasters B and C, related to the 2nd style decorations, making it therefore difficult to pin-point the phases. My considerations on phases are based on observations made in other houses. The differences observed were confirmed by the analyses at the ICVBC.⁷ The earlier, large-grained variety belongs to the group of plasters of the late 1st style, while the finer grained was placed in the group of plasters from 2nd style paintings in Casa del Bell'Impluvio and in Casa di Successus. Another observation regards a difference between the two layers in room 11. The first layer applied on the south wall, showing sketches of capitals and gladiators, has large grains, while the upper, decorated with 2nd style paintings, has fine grains (*Fig. 28*). In this case there is one phase and two applications: the first layer is a rough plaster.

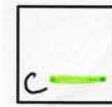
Summing up, this house was decorated with 2nd style paintings, which conceal fragments of the original 1st style decoration. The peristyle was partially redecorated with 3rd style paintings, and the last decoration phase is documented in the paintings in the *tablinum* and room 14.

⁷ See appendix.

I 9, 13 Plaster types, groups, locations

Room 1

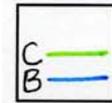
Last phase: type C 2, group C. East and west walls: 2nd style decoration, over pilasters and continuing in room 2.



Room 2

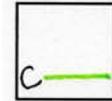
Earliest phase: type C 9, group B. West wall.

Last phase: type C2, group C. East and west walls, over SW corner.



Room 3

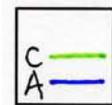
Last phase: type C2, group C. 2nd style decoration, on north, east and south walls, over SW, SE, NE corners.



Room 4

Earliest phase: type C1, group A. North wall: at the entrance to room 2.

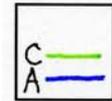
Last phase: type C 2, group C. 2nd style decoration on all walls, covering type C1.



Room 5

Earliest phase: type C1, group A. North wall: at the entrance to room 2.

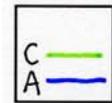
Last phase: type C2, group C. 2nd style decoration, all walls, covering type C1.



Room 6

Earliest phase: type C1, group A. West wall: at the entrance to room 2.

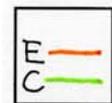
Last phase: type C2, group C. 2nd style decoration on west and north walls, over SW corner, covering type C1.



Room 7

Earliest phase: type C 2, group C. South wall: at the entrance to room 2.

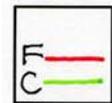
Last phase: type C7, group E. South wall: layer covering type C3.



Room 9

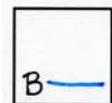
Earliest phase: type C2, group C. East and north walls, west side of entrance to room 11.

Last phase: type C14, group F. West, north and south walls, 3rd/4th style decoration, covering type C2.



Room 10

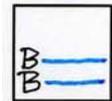
Last phase: type C 9, group B. 2nd style decoration.



Room 11

Earliest phase: type C9, group B. South wall: layer with sketches

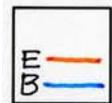
Last phase: type C9, group B. 2nd style decoration, all walls, covering type C9.



Room 12

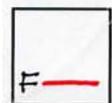
Earliest phase: type C9, group B. South wall, between rooms 9 and 11.

Last phase: type C7, group E. Decorated garden wall.



Room 14

Last phase: type C14, group F. 4th style decoration on all walls.



List of examined plaster samples

I 9, 13 Casa di Cerere (C)

2003-2004-2005

Nr	Room	Sample location in metres	Order of layer	Brief description	Decoration	Remarks	Type	Group
1 CNR	6	West wall, N side of entrance H. 1.08 at NE edge.	1 st layer with decoration. Covered by no. 2	Extremely small particles between few larger. Few red, few transparent crystals.		Clean lime with lumps. Stucco 2-3 mm.	C 1	A
2 CNR	6	West wall, N side of entrance H. 1.10 NE edge.	Upper layer with decoration. Covering no. 1 Decoration on all walls.	Small grains, mainly rounded. Black, some red, pale yellow, grains. Olive green. Black with red dots .	2nd style AWH: 2 nd	Stucco 3-7 mm. Unclean lime, beige lumps.	C 2	C
3	3	East wall H. 1.77, 1.10 from NE corner.	Layer with decoration.	Large and small, mainly black, some yellow. Few olive green, grey, broken black grains. Clean lime, few lumps.	2nd style AWH: 2 nd DV: 2 nd /1	Similar to C 1, larger grains. C 2 with clean lime.	C 2	C
4	4	North wall, entrance H. 1.77, 0.21 from N edge.	Layer with decoration. Decoration on all walls (2 motifs).	Large and small, a few large green. Unclean lime. Same as no. 2.	2nd style AWH: 2 nd DV: 2 nd /1	Stucco 10 mm.	C 2	C
5	4	North wall, entrance H. 1.00, 0.07 from S edge.	1 st layer covered by no. 4	Some large green crystals, few large grains. Same as C 1.		Extremely small particles.	C 1	A
6	1	East wall H. 1.92, 0.10 from SE corner. Pilaster: H. 0.95, 0.38 from NW edge.	Layer with decoration. Decoration on both walls.	Lack of small grains. Few red, pale yellow, olive. Unclean lime, too much.	2nd style AWH: 2 nd DV: 2 nd /1	Stucco 7 mm.	C 2	C
7	7	South wall H. 0.66, 0.35 from SW edge.	Layer with decoration. Covering a layer type C 2.	Large and small grains, many brown and yellow, no bright green. Good proportion large and small.	2nd style AWH: 2 nd	Warm colours. Clean lime, slightly yellowish, porous.	C 7	E
8	5	North wall H. 1.46, 0.44 from NW edge.	Layer with decoration. Covering type C1. Decoration on all walls.	Unclean lime. Pale yellow. 1 green..	2nd style AWH: 2 nd DV: 2 nd /1	Stucco 5 mm. The same as C 2.	C 2	C
9 CNR	11	South wall H. 1.21, 1.55 from SE corner.	Layer with sketches. Covered by no. 10.	Black and white. Very similar to C 2, dirty. Larger grains. Few crystals.		Very frail. Blue dots.	C 9	B
10 CNR	11	South wall H. 2.04, 0.84 from SE corner.	Layer with decoration. Covering no. 9. Decoration on all walls.	Large grains, mainly round, black, grey, brown, few red, few crystals. Some very large brown, grey, lack of small.	2nd style AWH: 2 nd DV: 2 nd /1	Porous lime, with cracks, dirty. Blue dots. Stucco 5 mm.	C 9	B
11	2	East wall H. 0.96, 0.77 from NE corner between rooms 6/7.	Layer with decoration.	Large and small, black, few red. Few crystals. Same as C 2.		Very frail. Dirty lime.	C 2	C

Nr	Room	Sample location in metres	Order of layer	Brief description	Decoration	Remarks	Type	Group
12	2	West wall.	Layer with decoration. On S and W walls, over SW corner.	Lack of small grains. Few crystals. Unclean lime.		Same as C10, porous lime.	C 9	C
13 CNR	9	North wall, W side of door. H. 0.32, 0.20 from entrance. Another sample, East wall H. 1.46, 0.54 from SE corner	Layer with decoration.	Warm colours. Very few red. Small particles, unclean lime.		Same as C2.	C 2	C
14 CNR	9	West wall H. 0.72, 0.49 from NW edge of entrance to room 11..	Layer with decoration. Decoration on large areas of all walls.	White lime. Filler with warm colours, lots of yellow, beige, red. Some very large orange-yellow and beige.	3 rd style? AWH: 3 rd ? DV: 3 rd , (late, candelabrum)	Clean lime with airbags.	C 14	F
15	9	West wall H. 0.54 at SW corner.		Volcanic red. Many yellow.	Same as C 14	Clean lime.	C 14	F
16	9	South wall H. 0.40, 0.05 from SW corner.	Layer with decoration. On W, E and S walls.	Many yellow. Volcanic red. Unclean lime, lumps of white lime.	Same as C 14		C 14	F
17	10	North wall H. 1.65, 1.20 from NE corner.	Layer with decoration.	Large grains, brown, black, grey, Porous lime.	2 nd style AWH: 2 nd DV: 2 nd /1	The same as C 10.	C 9	B
18	12	South wall Between rooms 9/11 H.	Layer with decoration..	Large grains, few small yellow. Clean lime. Lack of small particles.	3 rd style? AWH: ? DV: 3 rd , early/late	3 layers of the same plaster. No yellow.	C 9	B
19 CNR	12	North wall, low garden wall. H.	Layer with decoration.	Large grains, few small red. Lack of small particles. No crystals.		Rough layer with decoration?	C 7	E
20	14	West wall H 1.70, 0.38 from N side of entrance. H. 1.63, 0.34 from E side of entrance.	Layer with decoration. Decoration on all walls.	Round grains, warm and pale grey, many large beige, some very large orange-yellow.	4 th style? AWH: 4 th ? DV: 3 rd , late	Same as C14.	C 14	F