

Fig. 14. Casa di Successus. Sampling areas and colour code.

## I 9, 3 Casa di Puer Successus

*“There is a seemingly homogeneous phase of 4<sup>th</sup> style decoration in rooms 2, 5 and 6. We assume that this belongs to a phase after heavy earthquake damage. That damage is attested in the traces of 3<sup>rd</sup> style decoration of a demolished room at the south-west corner of the garden (8). There is also plasterwork in two phases in the semi-abandoned complex in rooms 10, 11, 12 at the bottom of the garden. This too must be pre-earthquake.”*

### *Plasters and phases*

Room 10, in this house, was the natural starting point. Rebuilding and redecorations prove the room had been transformed on several occasions. The earliest phase, a fine-grained plaster, group A, was found on the south wall, covered by a layer that belongs to group B, and of the same kind as used for the 1<sup>st</sup> style decoration in the Casa del Bell’Impluvio. Plasters in groups A and B are connected with earlier and later 1<sup>st</sup> style decorations. Layers of type B continue behind the east and west walls, indicating were rebuilding during the earlier history of the house.

At the socle level in the southwest corner there are two layers that belong to the same period. The first applied layer belongs to group B, and the upper, red layer, has inclusions of *cocciopesto* and volcanic material, making it a water resistant plaster.<sup>1</sup> The decoration above the socle has no inclusions of *cocciopesto*. It is the first layer on the wall, covered by a 3<sup>rd</sup> style decoration. Another early plastering is found in the southeast corner of the room. A very hard red mortar was applied as the first layer at the socle, but there is no certain indication as to which period it belongs; plaster groups A or B (*Fig. 13*). Waterproof mortars and plasters were used as protective layers on walls exposed to water or dampness, and are known from other buildings in Pompeii.<sup>2</sup>

The first decoration on the east wall was a 2<sup>nd</sup> style painting, made on a plaster that belongs to group C (*Fig. 15*).<sup>3</sup> Fragments of the painting appear at many areas and in some cavities, suggesting niches, in the wall. The paintings’ surface was hacked with a pick-hammer before the successive decoration. Cutting marks in the smooth and hard surface would ensure a good adherence for the fresh plaster. In this case the new, and last, decoration was of the 3<sup>rd</sup> style, plaster group E. There are remnants of this painting on all walls. A partial, final application reaches approximately the height of one meter above the floor. At first I interpreted this layer as a repair at the socle level, but since the plaster is of the same kind as on the wall, only with slightly finer grains, it may just be another application at the socle zone, and consequently, was regarded as a finer grained plaster of group E.

Plaster of type A was also found in other rooms in the building, either appearing as seams or concealed behind later decorations. In the southern part of the house, type A was found in room 12 as a plaster seam on the east wall, indicating a blocked door, and in the large space 8/9 as a layer continuing behind the later constructed northern wall. These areas were rebuilt and decorated with 3<sup>rd</sup> style paintings, which is the last decoration phase in this part of the building.

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<sup>1</sup> Bracci and Fratini 2004.

<sup>2</sup> In Casa della Parete Nera it represented the earliest phase in the house. Meyer-Graft 1988, 3.

<sup>3</sup> The same kind of plaster was used for the 2<sup>nd</sup> style decorations in Casa del Bell’Impluvio.



Fig. 15. To the left: Room 10, layers at the east wall. Fig. 16. To the right: Room 5, two decoration phases.

The northern part of the house has a different history. Traces of the early plaster, A, appear in the atrium and in room 5. In the atrium this period was covered with a plaster type C, connected with the 2<sup>nd</sup> style, and of the same kind as used for the decorations with pick-marks in room 10.

In room 5, there is a closed in opening the north wall with remains of a 1<sup>st</sup> style decoration plaster type A (Fig. 16). This opening was closed during the late history of the house as indicated by the plaster, type H. The opening is partially visible, since the painting, showing a little boy with a duck, which covered this space, is now in the Museum in Naples. A graffito on the painting, Puer Successus, has given the name to this house.<sup>4</sup> Plaster type H, containing *cocciopesto* and crushed materials, was used for the 4<sup>th</sup> style decoration in this and other rooms in the atrium area.<sup>5</sup>

### *Plasters and styles*

Richardson attributes the 4<sup>th</sup> style decorations in room 5 to an artist called the *Adone ferito painter*, assuming the painting is a late work of the artist, since he finds it slightly better than the early works of this “ordinary” painter.<sup>6</sup> Other decorations attributed to the *Adone ferito painter* are found in the nearby houses Casa della Venere in Conchiglia and Casa di Loreio Tiburtino.<sup>7</sup>

### *Discussion and concluding remarks*

Apart from the earliest phase, A, the southern part of the building has one history and the north, another. The southern part had its final and entire redecoration during the 3<sup>rd</sup> style. In the northern part, the rooms were redecorated during the late history of the house, probably post-earthquake. Room 10 was rebuilt and redecorated on some occasions. The waterproof plaster may indicate it was used as a bath at least for a period before the last restructuring during the 3<sup>rd</sup> style.

<sup>4</sup> Della Corte 1965, 339.

<sup>5</sup> The composition of the plaster is confirmed by analyses performed at ICVBC.

<sup>6</sup> Richardson 2000, 101.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson 2000, 91f.

## *I 9, 3 Plaster types, groups, locations*

### **Room 1**

*Last phase:* type PS 10, group H. East wall: remains of decoration, white and yellow.

### **Room 2**

*Earliest phase:* type PS 1, group A. North wall: at the entrance to room 1.

*Second phase:* type PS 4, group C. North wall: covering type PS 1, and east wall, blocked behind south wall.

*Last phase:* type PS 10, group H. West wall: covering type PS 4.

### **Room 5**

*Earliest phase:* type PS 1, group A. North wall: plaster in blocked window/door.

*Last phase:* type PS 10, group H. 4<sup>th</sup> style decoration on all walls.

### **Room 6**

*Last phase:* type PS 10, group H. Plaster on areas of all walls, over all corners.

### **Room 8/9**

*Earliest phase:* type PS 2, group B. West wall: plaster blocked behind north wall.

*Last phase:* type PS 3, group E. South and west walls: 3<sup>rd</sup> style decoration.

### **Room 10**

*Earliest phase:* type PS 1, group A. South wall: area at upper level.

*Second phase:* type PS 2, group B. South wall: layer blocked behind east and west walls, covering type PS 1.

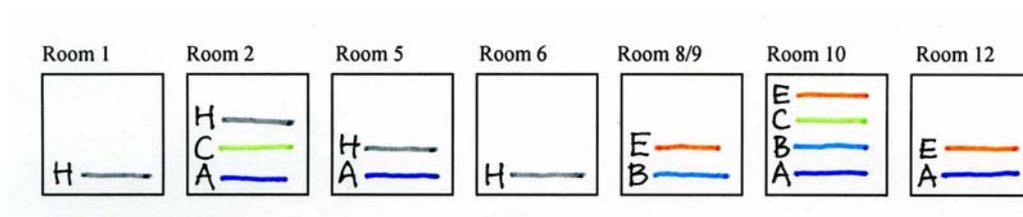
*Third phase:* type PS 4, group C. East wall: remains of yellow and red decoration, layer with pick-marks.

*Last phase:* type PS 3, group E. 3<sup>rd</sup> style decoration, layer with pick-marks, on all walls.

### **Room 12**

*Earliest phase:* type PS 1, group A. Layer blocked behind later constructed stairs.

*Last phase:* type PS 3, group E. Areas on south wall, SW corner, west and north walls, covering type PS 1.



## *List of examined plaster samples*

I 9,3 Casa del Puer Successus (PS)

2003 – 2004-2005

Nr	Room	Sample location in metres	Order of layer	Brief description	Decoration	Remarks	Type	Group
1 CNR	10	South wall H. 2.50, 0.10 from SE corner.	1 <sup>st</sup> layer applied over part of the wall, upper level. Covered by PS 2.	Mainly small grains; black, brown, grey, a few pale yellow. Some green crystals.		Hard. Unclean lime, with lumps. Little lime.	<b>PS 1</b>	A
2 CNR	10	South wall H. 2.45 at the SE corner.	2 <sup>nd</sup> layer blocked behind E wall. Covered by PS 3.	Mainly large black, pale and warm grey grains. Few small red grains. Few crystals.		Very brittle. White-beige lime. Much lime.	<b>PS 2</b>	B
3	10	South wall H. 1.44, 0.25 from SE corner. H. 1.40, 0.25 from SE corner.	3 <sup>rd</sup> layer. 2-3 applications of this plaster.	Small between large grains, mainly rounded. Warm grey, beige and black grains. Red, orange, yellow grains.	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> style</b> Layer with pick-marks, on all walls. Covering 1, 2, and 4	Rather hard. Pale beige lime, airbags, lumps of lime.	<b>PS 3</b>	E
4 CNR	10	East wall H. 1.65, 1.01 from SE corner.	Layer with decoration. Covered by PS 5	Extremely small particles between small grains. Many colours.	Decoration, layer with pick-marks.	Hard. Beige lime inclusion of "dust", little lime, few lumps.	<b>PS 4</b>	C
5	10	East wall H. 1.35, 1.20 from SE corner.	2 <sup>nd</sup> layer. Covering PS 4	Large and small grains. Many yellow. Few large beige.		Hard. Same as PS 3	PS 3	E
6 CNR	10	East wall H. 1.49, 1.20 from NE corner.	3 <sup>rd</sup> layer, with black decoration. Applied only on the lower part of the wall.	Large and small black, brown, grey grains. Some red, yellow, bright yellow.	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> style</b> decoration, lower level S and E walls, over the NE corner.	Hard. Clean lime. Same as PS 3 with more lime, airbags.	PS 3	E
7	12	East wall H. 1.17, 0.96 from NE corner.	Seam, blocked door. Covered by PS 8.	Black and white, small grains. Few green. Some very large grains.		Same as PS 1.	PS 1	A
8	12	East wall H. 1.40, 1.25 from NE corner.	Layer covering PS 7.		Plaster on areas of S wall, SW corner, W and N walls.	Same as PS 3.	PS 3	E
9	8/9	South wall H. 0.79, 0.07 from door. H. 1.13, 0.04 from door.	1 <sup>st</sup> layer with red/ochre decoration.	Many colours, a lot of yellow grains. Behind is an indefinable brown layer.	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> style</b> decoration on S wall, remains on W wall.	Same as PS 6.	PS 3	E
10 CNR 10bis	5	South wall H. 1.53, at the open window, left side.	1 <sup>st</sup> layer, with decoration. This plaster covers all walls.	Very small black, grey, brown between large grains. Lots of crystals. Good proportion lime and filler.	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Style</b> decoration covering all walls.	Hard. Dirty lime with white lumps.	<b>PS10</b>	H
11 CNR 10	5	North wall H. 1.33, 1.73 from NE corner.	Layer with decoration. Seam, blocked window.	Black and white, much filler, little lime. Small, few large. Green			PS 1	A

Nr	Room	Sample location in metres	Order of layer	Brief description	Decoration	Remarks	Type	Group
12	6	South wall H. 1.31, 0.40 from SW corner.		Lots of red, yellow grains. Small particles.	Covering areas on the walls, over all corners.	Very frail, "dusty" Powder.	PS 10	H
13	2	North wall, at NW corner H. 1.31, at the entrance to room 1.	1 <sup>st</sup> layer. Covered by PS 14.	Small grains, black and white, some large. Olive green crystals.		Much filler, little lime. Powder.	PS 1	A
14 CNR	2	North wall, NW corner H. 1.38, at the NW corner. H. 1.68, 0.02 from NW corner.	2 layers with stucco layer Covering PS 13.	Pale grey grains. Upper layer, smaller grains.		Much lime. Very frail.	PS 4	C
15 CNR 14bis	2	West wall H. 1.70 at the NW corner.	3 <sup>rd</sup> layer. Covering PS 14.	Black and white Large and small particles, dirty lime.	Large areas on W wall, SE corner.	Same as PS 17.	PS 10	H
16	2	East wall H. 1.15, at SE corner.	Layer blocked behind S wall. Covered by PS 17.	Black and grey. Few yellow, few olive green crystals. 2 layers, same as 13-14.	2 layers: below, PS1, above PS4.		PS 1 PS 4	A C
17	2	South wall H. 1.80, at SE corner.	Layer covering PS 16	Very small grains between large grains. Black and white.	Applied over two walls, over SE corner.		PS 10	H
18	1	West wall H. 1.36, 1.62 from entrance to room 2.	1 <sup>st</sup> layer with decoration.	Dirty.		Areas on W wall.	PS 10	H
19 CNR	10	South wall H. 1.37 at the SW corner.	Layer with red decoration, blocked behind W wall.	Same as PS 2 with red stucco. No pigments, red grains.		Same as PS 2.	PS 2	B
20	10	East wall H. 1.20, 0.25 from SE corner.	1 <sup>st</sup> layer (red mortar). Covered by PS 21.	The same composition as the red layer on PS 19.	Just <i>cocciopesto</i> Larger particles than the stucco layer on PS 19.			
21	10	East wall H. 1.30, 0.25 from SE corner.	2 <sup>nd</sup> layer covering PS 20 and covered by PS 22.	Layer with pick-marks. This layer is on all walls.	Beautiful. White lime, many colours.	Same as PS 8.	PS 3	E
22	10	West wall H. 1.10, 0.46 from SW corner.	Upper layer.			Same as PS 6.	PS 3	E
23	8	West wall H.	Seam, blocked behind N wall.		Black, grey, yellow, small and large grains		PS 2	B
24	8	North wall	1 <sup>st</sup> layer, covered by F 25.			Same as PS 3.	PS 3	E
25	8	North wall	2 <sup>nd</sup> layer.			Same as 24.	PS 3	E
26	8	Column				Same as 24, 25.	PS 3	E