PLASTER INVESTIGATION

Plaster layers in twenty houses over the site of Pompeii have been investigated in the present study. The houses are situated in six regions; I, V, VI, VII, VIII and IX. For simplicity reasons the houses are presented according to region, *insula* and house, beginning with *Regio I* and ending with *Regio IX*. At the very end, six houses in *insula V I* are presented as a study within the study.

The number of samples removed in a house has generally been between 10 and 20, but in particular cases some more or a few less were required for the purpose established beforehand.

Fig. 21. Plan of Pompeii with the indication of the regions in which buildings have been sampled. In the present study the following houses are included: *Regio I*: Casa e bottega I 9, 8, Casa e bottega I 9, 10, Casa I 16, 5. *Regio V*: V 1, 7 Casa del Torello, V 1, 13 Caupona, V 1, 14-16 Bakery and shop, V 1, 18 Casa degli Epigrammi Greci, V 1, 20-21, V 1, 23 Casa di Caecilius Iucundus North House, V 1, 24 Taberna, V 1, 26 Casa di Caecilius Iucundus South House, Casa V 3, 8. *Regio VI*: VI 2, 4 Casa di Sallustius, VI 2, 14 Casa delle Amazzoni, VI 5, 5 Casa del Granduca Michele, VI 9, 3-5 Casa del Centauro. *Regio VII*: VII 15, 1-2 Casa del Marinaio. *Regio VIII*: Structures below the Temple of Venus. *Regio IX*: IX 3, 5.24, Casa di Marcus Lucretius, IX 3, 19-20 Casa e panificio di Papirius Sabinus.
Fig. 22. Via dell’Abbondanza. The public well in front of house I 9, 1 Casa del Bell’Impluvio.
Fig. 23. Below, to the left: Casa del Frutteto, entrance.
Insula I 9

Insula I 9 is a rectangular block located between Via dell’Abbondanza and Via di Castricio in east-west direction and two minor streets running north-south. The block is situated at a short distance from the amphitheatre. The major houses, Casa del Bell’Impluvio, Casa di Successus, Casa del Frutteto, Casa di Amarantus and Casa di Cerere, are residential buildings with Tuscanic atrium and peristyle, traditionally dated to around 120 BC.¹ Some of the houses had commercial spaces at one or two sides of the main entrance. A plaster investigation at these houses was published in 2005.² Houses number 8 and 10 presented below were partially sampled but the studies not completed at the time. Walking along Via dell’Abbondanza from the Forum towards Porta Sarno, the first house of the insula that comes into sight is Casa del Bell’Impluvio with its adjoining shop. In front of the building is a public fountain made of lava decorated with a patera.³ Next is house number 3, Casa di Successus with adjacent bar, after which is the entrance to house 5, Casa del Frutteto, with commercial area at the corner. A great number of wine jars found in the house and its cellar, indicate the owner was in the wine trade.⁴ Around the corner, along the east lane at entrance 7 was the stable and garden area of house number 5. Further south is a row of three more modest houses, number 8, 9 and 10, each of which had a workshop at the front. Jars containing garum, a fish sauce, show the owner of property number 8 was trading with sea food. House and bottega number 9 belonged to a painter; 150 little pots with pigments and paints were found there.⁵ Who owned house number 10 is unknown but maybe it was a joint workshop with number 9. Properties 9 and 10 were linked in the earlier phases. By the final stage the only link was the access to the well in the garden.⁶ Further down the lane is the large house of Amarantus with bar area at the crossroads of Via di Castricio. Jars of wine and the inscription Amarantus Pompeianus provide us with the name of the wine trader.⁷ Entrance to the house of Amarantus is at the Via di Castricio, as is the entrance to the neighbouring house number 13, Casa di Cerere, named after a little terracotta bust representing Ceres.⁸ The lane at the west side of the insula is closed by walls of buildings and gardens except for a modest entrance into the garden of house number 13 and an entrance to the back of house 1.

² Freccero 2005.
³ Eschebach 1993, 48.
⁵ Della Corte 1965, (726b) 340.
⁶ Sophie Hay, personal comment, e-mail 2012-03-10.
⁷ Della Corte 1965, (726d) 340.
⁸ La Rocca et al 2002, 228.
Fig. 25. Above: Casa I 9, 8, room 8, north wall. Remains of a plain First style decoration with yellow socle, green string course and white main zone. A later decoration partially covers the yellow socle at the northwest corner.

Fig. 26. Below, to the left: plan of houses 8, 9 and 10. To the right: Casa I 9, 8, sampling spots.
I 9, 8 Casa e bottega

House I 9, 8 is situated at the east lane of the *insula*, just south of Casa del Frutteto and its adjoining stable. The owner may have been Romulo, a man in the seafood business. Jars containing conserved fish such as *garum*, an appreciated fish sauce, were found during excavations in 1952. According to Eschebach the house goes back to the Samnite period, and was rebuilt with reused materials after the earthquake in AD 62. Great changes had taken place in the interior part of the house where it connects with the garden and the bath area of Casa di Successus. Sampling was done in room 8, 9 and 10, and the plaster samples were compared to those in the same relative chronology in the neighbouring house.

Plasters and phases

In room 8 there are traces at the north and west walls of a plain First style decoration, consisting of a yellow socle above which is a string course painted green and the main zone of smooth white plaster. The question posed was if a connection between the phases in the house of Successus and this building could be established. The decoration in room 8 continues into the north wall which is the perimeter wall towards the garden of Casa di Successus, indicating there was previously a door or a window, walled up during one of the rebuilding periods. Room 8 was later redecorated in the Fourth style on plaster in group H. The First style decoration consists of two layers, the earlier of which belongs to group A subgroup Ab, and the second, carrying the decoration to group B. Although the two plaster layers are of different kinds, they seemingly belong to the same phase. The same phenomenon occurs in Casa di Successus; a fine-grained plaster of group Ab is found underneath a large-grained that belongs to group B. It cannot, however, be excluded there are two decoration periods. The two plaster types are found in Casa del Bell’Impluvio too, the fine-grained below floor levels and the large-grained at the First style decoration in room 12.

In room 10 was a similar result. Trapped in the east wall was a plaster layer in group A, and the first decoration was made on plaster in group B. The final decoration was in the Fourth style. At the west wall, south-west corner, the first layer was *cocciopesto*, the same way as at the other side of the wall, in Casa di Successus, room 10.

In room 9 *triclinium fenestratum* there are remains of a Third style decoration; a black socle and a main zone on which the colours have faded. The plaster used belongs to group E. The large window towards room 10 seems to be a late arrangement. The low wall, or high socle, below the window was decorated in the same style, but the plaster belongs to group H. In the

---

9 Della Corte 1965, (726a) 340.
10 Eschebach 1993, 49.
11 Sampling was done in 2004 in conjunction with the Director of the archaeological research project of the British School at Rome, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. For documentation concerning samples 8:1-8:16, see appendix.
12 PPP I, 102.
PPP the decoration is regarded as schematic Second style.\textsuperscript{13} Plaster analyses at the socle level indicates Third style except for the part below the window, which was redecorated in the same manner but in the Fourth style.

Results
Sixteen samples provided 5 plaster types including cocciopesto; A, B, E, H and X (cocciopesto). The earliest plaster 8:3 has all characteristics of subgroup Ab; it mainly consists of black particles of which many are long black broken crystals. There is a good proportion between large and small grains and between lime and filler. The binder is clean creamy white lime. The plaster is of good quality. Next phase, type, 8:1 is a large-grained plaster used for some First style decorations in the area. The grains are mainly black and grey and there is a lack of small grains, a combination that generally provokes fissures and voids as the plaster sets. The binder is slightly grey-beige lime. One sample has dirty lime and one was very frail. As many other plasters in this group it is of a fairly low quality. Sample 8:11 is another plaster with large-grained filler, but it contains many grains of varying colours such as beige, yellow and brown. The lime is clean creamy white. It is of modest quality due to lack of small particles and some lime lumps. Five samples belong to group H, reused plasters of the late days of Pompeii. The components differ in these plasters, but in common is the sandy look and the many crushed small particles. Two samples belong to group X, cocciopesto.

To sum up, the two earliest plasters in the house were found in walled up areas in room 8 and 10. To the same period/periods belong the earliest plasters in the neighbouring Casa di Successus. The three rooms sampled were redecorated in the Third style, and the area below the large window in room 10 belongs to the Fourth style, suggesting the large opening was made in the middle of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century AD. The quality of the plasters in this house is of a mediocre standard, except for the earliest phase.

\textsuperscript{13} PPP I, 102.
I 9, 10 Casa e bottega

Entering the broad access of this house there is no *vestibulum* but one proceeds directly into the large space that formerly was the *atrium*.\(^{14}\) At the right side along the wall bordering the street there is substantial remains of the staircase that lead to the upper floor, which is now lost. The unusual disposition of spaces and the absence of *vestibulum* may by due to a late restructuring of this and the nearby house number 11 Casa di Amarantus. Traces of decoration are not mentioned in PPP but the floors are generally dated to the 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) century BC.\(^{15}\) This may have been a sculptor’s workshop, which would explain the need for a wide opening and a large working space towards the street. The reason for suggesting a sculptor’s workshop is a marble portrait of an unknown person *Pompeianus* which was found in the house during excavation in 1952.\(^{16}\) At the interior sector, in the garden area, there was an open access

---

\(^{14}\) Sampling was done in 2004 in conjunction with the Director of the archaeological research project of the British School at Rome, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. I am grateful to Sophie Hay for comments on this text. For documentation concerning samples 10:1-10:5, see appendix.

\(^{15}\) PPP I, 103.

\(^{16}\) Della Corte 1965, 726c) 340.
between houses number 9 and 10. Such an opening indicates there was a family or business connection between the owners, as suggested by Eschebach. It seems there was an extension of house 10 towards south with the integration of some rooms of the neighbouring house 11, an enlargement that might point at a positive development in the artist’s or artists’ commissions.

Plasters and phases
Five samples were taken in the front area, room 1, 4 and 11. In room 4, on the west wall, north-west corner, there is an early decoration with the typical pick-marks that indicate the wall was prepared for redecoration. The perforated plaster belongs to group B, indicating a decoration contemporary with the First style decoration in house 8. Samples from the last decoration at the west and north wall in the *atrium* was made on a plaster that belongs to group E, Third style and of the same kind as in house 8. Also in room 11 there is a plaster seam, at the north-east corner, which belongs to an early decoration, plaster group B.

Results
Two plaster samples belong to group B and three to group E. Both groups contain plasters with large grains. The earliest of these, 10:1, is distinctively large-grained with many rounded grains, of which the majority is black or grey, but there are also some clusters of small grains. There are few crystals. The binder is a clean white, slightly beige lime. One of the samples has a stucco layer with a thickness of 4 mm. In areas with lack of small grains there are “airbags” or air-filled voids, as well as fissures in the lime. The later plaster 10:2 is similar to 10:1 because of the similar grain size and the rounded grains, but differs as far as the composition of the aggregate; this filler contains more grains of varying colours such as beige, brown and ochre. The lime is white or slightly beige and contains lime lumps. Both plaster types are representative of their groups and of normal quality.

Summing up, there are traces of the original First style decoration, contemporary with plasterwork in the neighbouring houses. Some redecoration in the front area was made in the Third style.

---

17 Hay, personal comment 2012-03-10.
18 Eschebach 1993, 50.
Insula I 16: Casa I 16, 5

Fig.29. To the left: Casa I 16, 5, room 11, seen from the rear part towards the entrance.
Fig.30. To the right: the room seen from the entrance towards the rear part with red and green decoration.

*Insula* 16 in *Regio* I is a long rectangle like most blocks in the area. At the south end is the large house number 5 with a hefty garden. The entrance is at Via della Palestra and at the north end runs Via di Castricio. The house, of which the west section was not excavated, may have been owned by a woman called Petronia. There are remains of decoration in some rooms, one of which were sampled.

In room 11 there is a decoration in which two typologies are combined: a plain decoration in the antechamber referred to as the Zone style and another in the First style in the alcove. The antechamber decoration consists of a yellow socle above which is the main zone kept white. According to D’Auria, this kind of decoration, normally with the division of the wall into three horizontal zones, of which the middle zone was always plain white, belongs to a system of the Hellenistic period. Sometimes the upper zone had mouldings or decorative elements. At the interior part of the room the decoration scheme and colours change: the socle is painted red and the main zone is green. The First style and the Zone style were contemporaneously used in Pompeii.

---

19 This limited investigation was made together with Dora D’Auria, Università degli studi di Napoli L’Orientale.
20 Eschebach 1993, 77.
The objective of sampling and studying plasters in the room was to establish if the two decorations were contemporary or not. Another question posed was if this kind of decoration would be datable to the early or later period of the First style.

**Results**

The plaster used for the different parts of the room is the same. It belongs to group A, subgroup Ab, contemporary with other First style plasterwork in the area. It is also compatible with the plaster in the bath in house V 3, 8, which was decorated in the same plain Zone style. A plaster of this type was used for the First style decoration of *cubiculum* 3 with alcove in Casa del Centauro, a room decorated in two patterns, although in one style. Another example on two patterns in one room is *cubiculum* 4 in Casa di Cerere, decorated in the early Second style.

The plaster used is distinctively “black and white”; the filler mainly consists of small black particles, angular and rounded, of which many are long black crystals. The binder is clean white lime. The quality of the plaster is good; good proportion between lime and filler, and between larger and smaller grains.

![Fig.31. Detail of room 11 with two kinds of decoration.](image-url)
Casa del Torello is situated at Via di Nola close to the crossroads of Via di Vesuvio and Vicolo di Caecilius Iucundus, in the vicinity of Porta Vesuvio. This large *domus* is, together with the narrow *caupona* in the north-west corner, the oldest building in the *insula*. Built in the Samnite period, its prominent limestone ashlar façade was designed to be impressive. One of the most famous elements of decoration in this house is the elaborate system of fountains in the *atrium* and the peristyle’s noteworthy *nymphaeum*. Kitchen and bath areas were provided with water too. The spaces discussed below are identified according to the plan used by the Swedish team.

Laidlaw mentions First style decorations were preserved in the *atrium* and in the first and second/third rooms at the east side of the *atrium*. The formerly large room 6/7 was divided into two smaller during rebuilding in the late Republican period, and the northern space was decorated in the Second style like many other rooms in the *atrium* area. Apparently, the Second style decorations were made during two phases.

---

22 The investigation was made together with Thomas Staub, who patiently answered all my questions on building phases and the structure of the house.
23 Leander-Touati 2010, 114.
24 Staub 2008, 109, 112.
25 Laidlaw 1985, 102f; The three rooms are indicated as 6, 7 and 8 on the plan used by the Swedish team.
26 Schefold 1957, 61.
To the earliest phase belong tablinum 13 and the alae (9, 14), decorated with painted pillars and marble panels and, in the tablinum, a fake door in the centre like in the Villa dei Misteri. The decorative scheme in the left ala consisted of the high socle above which were broad yellow panels imitating marble and smaller ones of violet hue, both with cinnabar borders. Between the painted pillars were hanging fruit garlands and, crowning the walls were the epistyle, frieze and cornice carried by slender standing figures, monochrome white. The right ala had red panels with green borders in the main zone above which were green ones of smaller size. There was also a central painting representing Leda and the swan. The other rooms with remaining Second style decoration were made later, in the mature style. To the later belongs the decoration in room 18, to the left of atrium. Some rooms, such as the first room to the right of atrium (6) and the bath (19), received new decorations in the Third style. Beyen points out that although the decoration of the bath was made in the Third style its structure indicates it was built in the Second style. According to Bastet, the decoration in room 6 was made in the late Third style. The questions posed about plaster layers in this house regard the time of re-decoration of some spaces. Therefore the early periods were not investigated. Sampling was made in room 6, 7, 8, 15, 16, 18 and 19. Ten samples were studied and two kinds of plaster were identified. These belong to group C, used for Second style decorations, and group E, used for decorations in the Third style.

The first sample in the house, T1, was removed from the walled up doorway between room 15 and the neighbouring Taberna V 1, 5. The plaster belongs to group E, connected with the Third style. The decoration of the north wall in room 15 and the east side of the wall in Taberna 5 have the same kind of plaster. To that period belongs the plaster used for decoration of the bath, room 19. A layer that butts against an earlier decoration in the southeast corner of room 19 belongs to group E too.

The second sample, T2, taken in room 7, provided the second type of plaster. It belongs to group C, connected with the Second style. Sampling was made at the middle zone, below the perforations for a stucco frieze. This kind of plaster was used for decorations in room 16 and 18, which corresponds with Beyen’s statement that the decoration in room 18 was in the Second style. Many decorations in Casa di Cerere, which are definitely recognized as good examples of the earlier or middle Second style were made on this kind of plaster. There is also a stylistic resemblance between the description of the decoration in the left ala and e.g. room 4 in Casa di Cerere.

27 Beyen 1960, 74.
28 Beyen 1960, 80.
29 Beyen 1960, 73.
30 Bastet, de Vos 1979, 88.
31 Beyen 1960, 73.
One fragment was sampled. It was found below the last floor level in room g, and the plaster belongs to group C.

Plaster type T2 is representative of group C. It has an aggregate of very small particles, many of which are crystals. The compact grains are mainly black and brown. The lime is clean white with a few small lumps. The plaster is well composed and well mixed.

Plaster type T1 is quite representative for group E. Its large grains are in a variety of colours. A particular characteristic is the beige grains shaped as beans. The lime is white, and in abundance compared to the filler. Both plaster types are of good quality, and have stucco layers that measure around 2-3 mm, which is a medium standard.

Fig 33. Casa del Torello. Plan with indication of sampling spots. Drawing: Based on CTC.
Fig. 34. V 1 24b, south wall. The photo is copied from the homepage of Insula V 1, Swedish Pompeii Project. Photo: Hans Thorwid.
V 1 24 Taberna

This study is connected to a problematic area of a brick repair in the shop situated between the two joined properties of Casa di Caecilius Iucundus. The objective was to identify plaster types that might shed light over the period when the repair of the wall was made. Was it before or after the earthquake in AD 62? The minute property number 24 consists of two rooms, the shop area a, and the inner room b. At the south wall in room b there is a large brick repair, around which some questions have been raised. The repair, situated close to the southwest corner, begins at the floor level and reaches the height of approximately two meters. According to archaeological interpretation, the whole wall has tilted in the direction of the front room due to destabilizing cesspits at both sides of the wall towards Casa di Caecilius Iucundus V 1, 26. Anne-Marie Leander Touati suggests other possible reasons than the earthquake for this repair. Plaster analyses on top of the repair had confirmed a pre-earthquake dating of the repair. The present investigation began with a study of the results of a previous investigation, in which plasters on the repair as well as on the east and west walls had been identified as in the First or early Second style. This plastering phase was, on south and east walls covered by a plaster type labelled 4D3, connected with the Fourth or late Third style, according to the documentation mentioned above. At the time of sampling I inspected the south, west, and east walls of the room, as well as the rear side of the wall, that is, the north wall in room c in the South House of Casa di Iucundus, where no similar damage was noticed.

Plasters and phases
Six samples were obtained in room 24b. The first sample (24:1) was removed from a very thin and uneven little plaster remnant on the brick repair. The sample consisted almost exclusively of grains, since the lime had washed out. It was a large-grained plaster common for plaster in group B as well as in group E. The presence of beige and red grains is not typical of group B but indicate the later period, group E.

---

32 This very limited study was made in collaboration with Anne-Marie Leander Touati. For documentation concerning samples 24:1-24:6, see appendix.
33 Leander Touati 2010, 131-132.
34 Pettersson, in the plaster analyses report 2006, recognizes the plaster as similar to 1A12 in Casa degli Epigrammi Greci, which she identified as of the Second style. This kind of plaster is in my system placed into group B, which contains plasters of the late First and early Second style.
35 Inspection and sampling was made in October 2010. The plan in PPP of insula V 1, indicates an opening between 24b and room c in V 1 26. The problem which disturbed me was solved by Renée Forsell who had measured the walls to understand the correlation between the repair end the latrine channel in the shop at the other side of the wall, and found that a cross-wall butts against the south wall in 24b, exactly at the position of the repair; a mistake must have been made on the plan mentioned above.
Sample number 24:1 was not quite representative of any period, but the second one, is. Sample 24:2 was removed at a plaster layer on the clay lining that had been applied over several bricks; this plaster definitely belongs to group E with its many yellow and beige grains and the clean white lime. The fillers of the two samples are similar, as is also that of sample number 3, removed at a layer, which is overlapping the southwest corner. There is also an unusual presence of small yellow particles in the lime and among the grains in samples 24:1 and 24:2. The composition of the filler is of the same kind in the three samples, but the lime is not; in sample 24:1 there is hardly any lime left, 24:12 has enough lime which is clean, and the lime of 24:3 is something in between. The absence of clay lining underneath sample 24:1 still needs to be explained; maybe the clay was not applied in an even layer, but only where it was necessary to make a smooth area. However, the three samples belong to group E.

Sample number 4 comes from the doorway at the west wall, towards room 24a. This plaster is different. Its’ filler is similar to 24:2, but the smaller grains and more crystals are characteristics of group F. Also sample number 6, taken at south wall at the east side of the brick repair belongs to the group F. At the west side of the repair is an area of plaster that belongs to group G, indicating a repair made after the earthquake in 62.

Results
Three different kinds of plaster were identified, and these belong to groups E, F and G, indicating plastering in the Third and possibly in the late Third/early Fourth style as well as a repair made after the earthquake. No plaster of an earlier period was found.

The samples of plaster type 24:1 have the same kind of filler but only one of these, 24:2 is quite representative for group E. The other two are of meagre quality. The plasters in group F are of good quality, well balanced and well mixed. The aggregate is many-coloured and contains large and small particles, many of which are crystals. Sample 24:5 is brown and contains crushed materials of various kinds, typical of plasters used for repairs during the final period. Taking all information into account, plaster analyses confirm that the repair was made before the earthquake in AD 62 and there were re-decorations in the room slightly later. When new damages appeared after the earthquake these were mended with a brown plaster made of reused materials.
Insula V 3: Casa V 3, 8

Fig. 35. To the right: The bath, east wall with slit window.
Fig. 36. To the right: The tablinum, west wall. Remains of Zone style decoration.

This house and bakery has the main entrance towards Via di Nola. The rebuilt Tuscanic atrium, mill stones, working bench and a large oven show it was transformed into a bakery and functioned as such at the time of the eruption. There still are some remnants of the original First style decoration in a few rooms, such as the atrium, the tablinum, and cubiculum 5. In cubiculum 5 there is a smooth stucco cornice at the upper zone and a fragment of a fascia. The tablinum preserves a traditional yellow socle above which is a string course and the main zone of horizontal drafted panels. Three courses of drafted panels in the upper zone are separated from the main zone by a fillet. The upper wall was crowned by a fascia and dentil cornice. In the central part of the house, east of tablinum and andron is a latrine or bath with vaulted ceiling and a small window overlooking the street. Fairly much of a decoration in the so called Zone style, of the same kind as in house I 16, 5, room 11, is preserved. On south and north walls is a recessed cocciopesto socle below a flat upper wall with red fascia. The access to the bath is through an arched doorway. Three

36 This limited study was made together with Dora D’Auria, Università degli studi di Napoli L’Orientale.
38 PPP II, 75; Laidlaw 1985, 113.
39 Laidlaw 1985, 113; PPP II, 74.
41 Laidlaw, 1985, 113.
samples were taken in the house; two in *tablinum* and one in the bath. The objective was to compare the plaster with that of a similar plain First style decoration in Casa I 16 5.

**Results**

The plaster is distinctively “black and white” and belongs to the First style, group A. Its main characteristics such as the aggregate of prevalently black particles, of which many are broken black crystals, indicate subgroup Ab. But the many small rounded grains are characteristic of subgroup Aa too. Plasters in the later group are often containing more brown and grey grains and, therefore, this plaster is placed into subgroup Ab. The lime is white and the plaster of good quality; well proportioned, well mixed and in good condition. It is of the same kind as that used in Casa I 16, 5.

![Fig.37. Casa V 3, 8. Atrium and bakery.](image-url)
“Pompeii. Progetto Regio VI” was initially a joint project of the universities of Perugia, Napoli, L’Orientale, Trieste and Venezia, later joined by Siena. The objective was to carry out stratigraphic excavations and research, aiming at publishing until now inedit excavations in the region. Eight of the sixteen insulae have been subject to investigations, and successively the project was extended to regions V, VII and IX.

Series of trenches were made in the individual houses to establish construction periods. Documentation and definitions used within the different houses of this vast project has been made according to pre-established principles. Two distinctive building phases have been identified: the earliest to the 6th and 5th centuries BC after which there was a period of abandonment, until a second intense construction period began in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. The existence of an archaic phase contemporary with the period of pappamonte walls has been ascertained. Remains of archaic structures dated to the 3rd century BC are regularly found under later buildings. The largest plots are found in particularly good positions such as a natural high level within the insula, close to crossroads or important roads. These archaic structures are defined as “protocase”.

Some buildings within the Progetto Regio VI were selected for sampling in the present plaster study. Sampling in Casa del Centauro, Casa del Granduca Michele and Casa di Sallustius was made in 2005. During sampling, some odd plasters found at levels that could only be of the First style or earlier, made me assume they represented a period prior to the First style. Further sampling and analyses was postponed until the project received funding in 2010. Casa delle Amazzoni and Casa del Marinaio were sampled in 2010-11, as were the fragments of wall paintings found in all houses.

---

43 Coarelli 2008, 173.
44 Coarelli 2008, 175; Pesando 2008, 159.
46 VI 2, 4 Casa di Sallustius,VI 2, 14 Casa delle Amazzoni, VI 5, 5 Casa del Granduca Michele, VI 9, 3-5 Casa del Centauro, VII 15, 1-2 Casa del Marinaio, as well as houses I 16, 5 and V 3, 8.
VI 2, 4 Casa di Sallustius

Fig.38. Sampling at the continuation of the foundation wall from the atrium in room 16 to the south.

Casa di Sallustius is a prominent house of large dimensions situated along Vicolo di Narciso and in the vicinity of Porta Ercolano. It is a characteristic house of the 2nd century BC, by Maiuri considered to be one of the noblest examples of a pre-Roman house of the Samnite period. Large part of the impressive First style decoration remains in many rooms around the atrium.

Three samples were obtained in Casa di Sallustius. Two of these were removed from levels below the last floor in room 35 and one in room 16, presumed to represent the earliest decoration phase, or phases. The samples were studied under the microscope, and later analysed at CNR/ICVBC in Florence.

Results

The three samples have the same kind of plaster which belongs to group A, subgroup Aa, used in buildings during an early phase of the First style. To the same group belong plasters used for First style decorations in the Temple of Apollo and Casa del Granduca Michele. The results of the two investigations are similar; the three samples belong to the same group. The plaster has high quality plaster typical of fine First style decorations. The filler mainly consists of black particles of which many are long black broken crystals. The grains are rounded and generally of very small size, a characteristic indicating subgroup Aa, just as the inclusion of brown and beige small grains. The binder is clean white or slightly beige lime with just a few small lumps.

47 Stella, Laidlaw 2008, 156. The house is studied within Progetto Regio VI.
48 Maiuri 1955, 41.
49 PPP II, 116-123.
50 For schedules and results of the investigation, see appendix.
Casa delle Amazzoni is a house of medium sized dimensions, situated along Vicolo di Narciso in the east sector of insula VI 2. The house was subject to stratigraphic excavations between 2002 and 2006. The present investigation was to study plasters of the earliest phases still in situ in relation to a presumed redecoration in the Third style. This building belongs to the oldest group of houses at the insula, constructed in the Samnite period in the second half of the 3rd century BC, and its façade built in opus africanum. Casa delle Amazzoni has essentially maintained its original structure and dimensions, indicating that the building phases were few. Remains of First style decorations in the fauces were identified by Mau. The decoration was given indentations by a pick-hammer before the plaster of the later decoration, regarded as in the Third style, was applied. A similar hacked layer in cubiculum 4 was regarded in PPP as illegible and another one, the red socle in atrium 2 not mentioned at all. The last decoration in the atrium was considered to be in the Fourth style, as were the decorations in rooms 9, 10, 11 and 13. A decoration in room 8 was recognized as in the Third style. Paintings of amazons in oecus have provided the name of this house.

---

51 The investigation was made in collaboration with Valentina Befani, Università di Perugia. The house is studied within Progetto Regio VI. For documentation regarding samples CA1-CA11, see appendix.
52 Befani et al. 2011, 460.
53 PPP II, 126.
54 PPP II, 127.
55 Schefold 1957, 94.
56 Eschebach 1993, 158.
Most walls were constructed in *opus africanum* while the north atrium wall, the boundary wall towards the adjoining house number 15, was made in *opus incertum* of lava and limestone, which would indicate a later construction period. The red socle of the first period corresponds with the floor level of the Samnite period in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century BC. At that level, a floor of *terra battuta*, ceramic fragments dated to the end of the 6\textsuperscript{th} and beginning of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century BC was found.

**Plasters and phases**

Plastered layers in room I, 2, 4, 8, and a fragment found in room 4, provided in total eleven samples. Sampling began at the north wall in atrium 2, where two decorated plaster layers are visible below the present ground level. Between these are two undecorated layers, the lower of which was perforated to secure good adherence for the next application of plaster. Sample CA1, taken at the earliest red socle, represents the first phase in the building; it is a brown plaster, different to plasters in group A. The second layer, CA2, is a brown plaster too. Applied on the first phase, this layer with hack-marks may be interpreted as an intermediate phase or a decoration, applied some time before the next layer, CA3. Sample CA3 was removed from a thin white plaster layer that functioned as a preparation for the second decoration with red painted surface, represented by CA4. On top of all these layers is the final one, a decoration represented by sample CA11, a plaster type that belongs to group F. Plasters in group F are related to the Third style and may have been used in the early Fourth style too.

CA11-------- Last decoration.
CA4-------- Fourth layer, decoration, red socle.
CA3-------- Third layer, a thin plaster layer.
CA2-------- Second layer, white plaster layer with hack-marks.
CA1-------- First decoration, red socle.

A hacked layer in *fauces* 1 was sampled. It was covered with a decoration that Mau stylistically identified as in the Third style, not sampled. In room 4, at the south wall are two decoration periods. The first phase is contemporary with the second red socle in the atrium, and the redecoration was made on plaster in group F and of the same kind as the final decoration of the atrium. At the east wall in room 8 towards the atrium is a large decorated area, its angle rounded. This plaster belongs to the second red socle period too. One fragment from a red drafted panel was sampled, and the plaster was of the same kind as CA3.

---

57 Befani et al 2011, 460.
The Results

There are three decoration phases at the north wall in the atrium, two early with red socle and one that represents the last decoration in the room. The two red socles have different kinds of plaster. The hacked layer in the atrium and the layer with hack-marks in fauces are of the same kind.

Many samples in this house have been analyzed at the CNR/ICVBC and compared to beige-brown-grey samples in other houses. The observations made under the microscope are confirmed by laboratory analyses; the earliest plaster, CA1 is in a group of plasters labelled 0 after the concept stile zero. To this group belongs the plaster of a fragment with a painted wave motif, found in Casa del Centauro. Sample CA2 corresponds to the earliest plasters in Casa del Granduca Michele. CA3 and CA4 are not identical but have the same kind of filler. Regarding CA3/CA4 the result of the two investigations are slightly different. Laboratory analyses consign the plaster to an intermediate group with characteristics of group 0 and group Aa. To this group belongs the second phase at Casa del Centauro, CC5, which is the earliest registered in situ. According to my observations CA4, in spite of its beige appearance, belongs to plasters in group A, subgroup Aa rather than to group 0.

How explain the four layers of early plasters on the north atrium wall? This wall, the boundary wall to the neighbouring house number 11 was made in opus incertum, a type of wall construction later than the plaster used for earliest decoration of the north wall. One possible explanation might be there was an earlier perimeter wall, possibly in opus africanum, in the same location, a hypothesis rejected by Befani, since excavations did not reveal any signs of such a wall.58 Another observation made during excavation was, that the opus africanum wall at the façade continues for another meter compared to the present wall, which might indicate the earlier perimeter wall was slightly further north. Excavation of the area was not possible due to the good preservation of the next door mosaic floor. Therefore, the question about the early decoration plaster remains unsolved. However, the early date of the plaster corresponds with the date of the original structures of the house in the early 3rd century.

Summing up, there were comparatively few decoration phases; after the initial period of Style zero and the First style, the decoration seemingly was intact until redecoration took place in the late Third or early Fourth style. All plasters used in this house are brown or beige, with the exception of plasters in group F. Plasters that carry decoration have good proportions between small and larger particles and between lime and filler. Laboratory analyses show that the brown/beige colour was not due to earth but to the very small size of many grains.

58 Befani, personal communication 2012-03-08.
Fig. 41. Plan of Casa del Granduca Michele, protocasa, in grey the structures of the II phase (middle of the 2nd century BC), with indication of sampling spots. Drawing: Dora D’Auria.

Casa del Granduca Michele, with its main entrance at the Vicolo di Modesto, is a traditional house of the Samnite period from the end of the 3rd century BC. In this house the Samnite period is divided into two phases, distinguished by different kinds of decoration. To the late Samnite period belongs the construction of a courtyard probably with colonnade around, in which were eight rooms at the rear part of the dwelling. The house as seen today is organized around the Tuscan atrium and was, as other houses of the period, built in opus incertum. The building’s history goes back to even earlier date. Trenches in the garden and elsewhere in the house reveal three floor levels that correspond with construction phases. To the earliest period belong floors of terra battuta, made on a preparation of crushed travertine. In room 5 such a floor covered with a layer of ashes points at the type suggested by Vitruvius for winter triclinia, opus graecanicum. Next is the floor of the protocasa dated to the great rebuilding period in the middle of the 2nd century BC. Finally, the floor levels were slightly raised in the Imperial period at the end of the 1st century BC. Underneath the 1st century BC peristyle, in room 9a of the protocasa there are remains of a yellow socle and a white main zone. Plain white fragments of wall paintings and the absence of drafted panels suggest the more than 6 m long north wall of opus formaceum was decorated in the Zone style.

59 The investigation was made in collaboration with Dora D’Auria, Universita degli studi di Napoli L’Orientale. The house is studied within Progetto Regio VI. For documentation on samples GM1-GM20, see appendix.
60 D’Auria, personal communication regarding building materials and construction phases 2012-03-05.
61 D’Auria 2011, 447f.
62 Pesando 2005, 94f.
63 D’Auria 2011, 453.
The original decoration in the First style remains in some areas such as at the socle levels in room 9b, in fauces 1 and in the atrium. Excavation of the atrium has provided two different kinds of First style cornices, found in association with fragments compatible with the redecoration in the 2nd century BC. The shape of one fragment, painted in yellow and wine red, had an area showing it was a connected with the ceiling. The second had a painted decoration referring to a Lesbian cymatium. Fragments with similar decoration found in domus VI 16, 26, were dated slightly earlier, to the end of the 3rd or beginning of the 2nd century BC. Two types of ceiling fragments were found in the atrium too. One was a cassette decoration and the other a cubic pattern, the later known from mosaic pavements and wall decorations of the Second style, such as those in the Casa dei Grifi in Rome. In Pompeii the pattern, combined with a motif of a painted wave, is known only in room 7 in domus I 20, 4. In Casa del Fauno the cubic pattern was used in one room and in another room, the black wave motif is found on the socle below the main zone which is in the First style. To the late period in Casa del Granduca Michele belong Fourth style decorations in triclinium and peristyle.

Sampling in situ was made during the excavation campaign in 2005. Not only plaster was sampled but additional materials as well, such as waterproof plaster and opus graecanicum. Later, eight fragments of wall plaster were sampled too. In total, twenty samples were studied. Samples were taken in room 1, 5, 7, 9b and 9c, below levels dated to the period prior to or connected with a floor of the Samnite house. The fragments were found at excavations of room 5, atrium 2 and room 9a.

Plasters and phases
All samples obtained in situ are from layers are of the Samnite period, either period II, phase 1 or period II, phase 2. The first sample, GM1, was obtained at the yellow socle in room 9b, dated to period II, phase 2. The second sample, GM2, was removed from a layer situated at a level below the floor of period II phase 2, in the same room. The plasters were of different kinds; GM1 was identified as belonging to group A, while there were uncertainties regarding GM2, which either might be a preparation layer or a plaster of an earlier phase. Sample number four, GM4, was removed from a layer below the floor in room 9c, a plaster that was partially covered by a decoration of a later period, represented by type GM1. These samples were in a group of eight analysed at CNR/ICVBC in Florence.

64 D’Auria 2011, 454.
66 Brun 2008, 68.
67 PPP II 144; Eschebach 1993, 169f.
68 GM3 (presumed pavement), GM9 (waterproof plaster), GM10 (opus graecanicum). Another sample, GM7, created problems because it was different from all other plasters. In the end, a second sample was taken, and the problem was solved: the new sample, GM7 new, was of a kind that would be expected. The first GM7 had been removed from a repair made already in antiquity.
Results
Laboratory analyses attribute the plaster of GM2 to group 0, period II phase 1 or earlier. The very fine-grained filler gives the plaster a dark brown appearance. Sample GM11, taken from a fragment found in the preparation for the opus graecanicum floor belongs to the same group. Plaster type GM4 belongs group Aa, related to period II phase 1. It was found in room 9c were the decoration was in relative chronology with next phase, type GM1, group Ab, which is connected with the yellow socles of the Samnite house, period II phase 2. All decorated fragments investigated either belong to subgroup Aa or Ab. As an example, the cornice fragment decorated with Lesbian cymatium and the cassette decoration had plaster type GM4, the cubic pattern type GM1. Most samples are easily attributed to either Aa or Ab, but some have characteristics of both groups. In one case, GM19, there is a resemblance between GM4 and GM2. In general, the plasters are of high quality, well mixed and well balanced as is usual for materials used in First style decoration. Even the brown plasters of the earliest phase are of a good quality.

Fig.42. Casa del Granduca Michele, room 9b towards room 9a. Different floor levels.
Casa del Centauro, situated between the Via di Mercurio and Vico del Fauno, is also known as the *domus* of A. Vettius Caprasius Felix.⁶⁹ The oldest part of the house at entrance number 3 dates back to the second quarter of the 2nd century BC, a period when the city block received the layout visible today. Underneath the walls of the present house are the structures of the preceding, modest sized *protocasa*, dated to between the end of the 4th and beginning of the 3rd century BC (period III, phase 1). The *protocasa* was partially restructured at the end of the 3rd century, (period III, phase 2).⁷⁰ Remains of decorations connected to both periods have been found. Studies of the wall structures reveal that the walls at the north side of the atrium towards the neighbouring house Casa del Meleagro, built in *opus africanum* bonded mainly with clay, and the façade in *opus quadratum* are the oldest remaining structures.⁷¹ The *protocasa* was destroyed at the middle of the 2nd century BC and the floor level raised in the new house, as proved, for example, in *cubiculum* 2, to the left of *fauces*. To the same period belong traces of a red socle in the atrium.⁷²

---

⁶⁹ The investigation was made in collaboration with Antonella Aiello and Renata Esposito, Università degli studi di Napoli L’Orientale. The house is studied within Progetto *Regio VI*. For documentation regarding samples CC1-CC18, see appendix.

⁷⁰ Esposito 2011, 440f. There are earlier construction phases, I and II, underneath the Samnite house.

⁷¹ Pesando 2005, 84.

⁷² Esposito 2011, 438.
At the beginning of the 2nd century BC (period IV), the house received a Tuscan atrium and it was extended to comprise the nearby property with entrance at VI 5, 5. Slightly later is the well known First style decoration in cubiculum 3, described by Mau. Fragmentary decorations in the First style were identified by Laidlaw too, in oecus 2, cubiculum 5a, 5d and oecus 32, mentioning that Mau noted traces also in cubiculum 5b and 5c.

Third style decorations, as well as some illegible, were noted by Mau in tablinum 6, and in the tablinum (26) behind the Corinthian atrium. The later, dated to 30-45 AD, had mythological motifs depicting Meleager and Atalanta, Hercules and Nessus. Richardson attributes these paintings to the so called Centauro painter. Cubiculum 2 and other rooms in the building later received new decorations in the Fourth style. Schefold mentions Fourth style decorations with animals and floating figures, and mythological paintings in the same style in the exedra behind the peristyle. Finds of medical instruments and glass bottles indicate this was a doctor’s house and studio.

In the present investigation, the earliest decoration periods have been in focus.

Plasters and phases
Sampling was made at decorated layers in room 2, 3, 5b, 16 and 32, at stylistically identified First style decorations or at decorated layers trapped behind later cross-walls. Ten fragments found during excavation of fauces at entrance 3, room 4, 5b, 5c, and 16, were sampled with the objective of finding a possible correlation between fragments and decorations still in situ. The fragments had been sorted into nuclei based on studies of materials, stylistic elements and the area in which they were found. All were attributed to period III, phase 1 or phase 2. Among the fragments was part of a wave pattern painted in black on a white background. In total, twenty small samples were studied, five of these analysed at CNR/ICVBC in Florence. The first sample, CC1, was supposed to provide the earliest plaster type in the house. It was obtained at the yellow socle in cubiculum 2, connected with the floor of the Samnite house. The plaster belongs to group A, subgroup Ab. The second sample, CC2, was taken in cubiculum 3, decorated in the First style. This plaster belongs to group B, which includes plasters from First and early Second style decorations. Behind the south wall of cubiculum 3, in room 15, entrance 4, there is a decoration with plaster and stucco trapped behind the later constructed cross-wall, south wall of cubiculum 3. This plaster, CC5, was expected to be of the same kind as CC1, but was quite different; grey and with very small grains. It has characteristics of group 0, early plasters that look grey, beige or brown.

73 PPP II, 202; (Mau W 74-75); Schefold 1957, 114.
74 Laidlaw 152.
75 PPM II, 204.
76 Bastet, De Vos 1979, 58.
77 Richardson 2000, 61.
78 PPM II, 202.
79 Eschebach 1993, 189f.
Results
Plasters in group 0, Ab and B, were identified. The earliest phase in situ was found in room 15 trapped behind a wall. To this phase belongs a socle at the first floor level in room 16, the fragment with black wave pattern on white background, indicative of stile zero, and fragments found in fauces of entrance 3, room 4 and 5c (phase 1, nuclei I and II, end of the 4th, beginning of the 3rd century BC). Laboratory analyses attribute the plaster in room 15 and the wave motif to group 0/Aa, together with plaster CA3/CA4. The plaster of the decoration in cubiculum 2 and the plaster of six fragments in nuclei III and IV (phase 2, nuclei III and IV, end of the 3rd century BC) belong to group Ab. To the same group belong plasters of likewise yellow socles in Casa del Granduca Michele and Casa di Amaranthus. The plaster in cubiculum 3, antechamber and alcove is later, and belongs to group B. All the plasters in this house are of a high quality. The lime is clean, the fillers have good proportions between large and small grains, and the components are well mixed. Also the grey/beige plasters of the earliest phase are of excellent quality.

Fig.45. Casa del Centauro, atrium towards fauces and the street. In the left side building is cubiculum 3, and in the one at the right side is cubiculum 2.
Casa del Marinaio is situated along Vicolo del Gallo in the eastern sector of insula VII 5, and it occupies about a third of its entire area.\textsuperscript{81} According to Franklin the oldest part is the classic atrium house at the high terraced plot while the rooms in the sunken garden area were constructed later.\textsuperscript{82} The atrium walls of limestone framework with ashlar blocks predominating, and the façade was rebuilt.\textsuperscript{83} Recent excavations have revealed that the structures visible today were built in the beginning of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century BC.\textsuperscript{84} A trench excavated in room c along the boundary wall towards the neighbouring house number 3, brought into light the earlier structure of the original perimeter wall. Also the trench in room l provided material of the earlier building, the protocasa, of the late 3\textsuperscript{rd} or early 2\textsuperscript{nd} century which was demolished when the present walls were built and the floor paved at a higher level in the 1\textsuperscript{st} century BC.\textsuperscript{85} The rooms in the atrium complex were richly decorated. Most of the floors were paved with black and white mosaics, among these the ships-mosaic in the fauces that gave the house its name.\textsuperscript{86} Laidlaw dates the pavements to the Republican-early Augustan period. The baths in the rear part of the building were added in the Augustan era, a period when most of the decorations were made.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{81} The investigation was made in collaboration with Marinella Antolini and Valentina Befani, Universita di Napoli L’Orientale. The house is studied within Progetto Regio VI. For documentation regarding samples CM1-CM11, see appendix.
\textsuperscript{82} Franklin 1990, 45.
\textsuperscript{83} Laidlaw 259-60; Eschebach 1993, 341f.
\textsuperscript{84} Antolini et al. 2007, 9.
\textsuperscript{85} Befani et al 2011, 462f.
\textsuperscript{86} Franklin 1990, 21.
\textsuperscript{87} Befani et al. 2011, 461; Franklin 1990, 60.
First style decoration remains in room $q$ and $r$, which opens into corridor $p$ that leads from the atrium to back garden. This was originally a single room with walls of limestone and lava rubblework. Traces of a yellow socle, under two rectangular black horizontal drafted panels are preserved on the east wall of room $r$, and the decoration continues into room $q$ behind a later crosswall.\textsuperscript{88} Directly above the panels there is a projecting string course with a green fascia and a white bottom edge; its crowning moulding is lost. In cubiculum $m$, at the west side of fauces opening onto the atrium, Laidlaw mentions possible traces of a First style pattern in the undercoat beneath a later redecoration. Mau noted a recessed red socle below a flat white upper wall in the room in front of the baths but no traces of this structure remain.

Paintings with mythological motifs in the Third style have been observed in various rooms, among these in exedra $z$, where the massacre of the Niobids was represented on the north wall.\textsuperscript{89} This painting was, according to Richardson, the work of an artist called the Triclinium painter.\textsuperscript{90} Further motifs in the bath area, made in a different artistic style, depicting Perseus and Andromeda, The Punishment of Dirce, and Polyphemus and Galatea, suggest these were works of the so called Boscotrecaze painter.\textsuperscript{91} A painting with mausoleum, temples and porticoes against a marine landscape, was recorded on an aquarelle of an anonymous artist.\textsuperscript{92}

**Plasters and phases**

Eleven samples were obtained from a few selected areas on walls in room $c$, $m$, $r$, and $q$. Later, four fragments found in rooms $l$ and $c$, were sampled as well. Approximately 1000 fragments of wall paintings had been found during excavations, and these had been divided by the archaeologists into two nuclei based on typology and decoration.\textsuperscript{99} The objective of sampling some fragments was to understand if there was a relation to plasters still *in situ* and if there was any difference between the plasters in the two nuclei.

Four samples were obtained in room $c$. The first, CM1, was removed from a yellow socle at the west wall. The plaster with its clean white lime and many-coloured large grains belongs to group E, connected with the Third style. Sample number two, CM2, was obtained at the north wall from the first layer which was covered with a later decoration. The plaster on the earlier layer belongs to group A. It is a distinct “black and white” plaster, with clean white lime and lots of black grains and crystals. The aggregate with its small, rounded grains and the presence of some grey and brown are indicative of subgroup Aa. Samples 3 and 4 from layers at the North and south walls respectively, belong to group E.

Sample number six, CM 6, removed from a yellow decoration in room $r$, trapped behind a later cross-wall is compatible with CM2, group Aa. There is a difference; CM2 has slightly

\textsuperscript{88} Laidlaw, 259f.
\textsuperscript{89} Franklin 1990, 21. The paintings are dated to between 20BC-AD37.
\textsuperscript{90} Richardson 2000, 40.
\textsuperscript{91} Richardson 2000, 39.
\textsuperscript{92} Pompei 1748-1980, 135.
\textsuperscript{93} Befani et al. 2011, 464f.
larger grains and a mixture of grains of volcanic materials plus crystals or pyroxenes, while CM6 is of a type that occasionally appears as top layer; it has an aggregate consisting almost completely of pyroxenes. Samples CM2 and CM6 belong to the same decoration period, group A, subgroup Aa.

Results
To sum up, three plaster types were found in Casa del Marinaio, two of which belong to the First style and one representing the Third, confirming archaeological and stylistic interpretations. The first decoration phase in room c and room q was made in the First style and later redecorated in the Third style. The remains of decorations in room m and room q, belong to the Third style. The fragments investigated had plasters that belong to group Aa; sometimes distinctly type CM6 and sometimes with characteristics of CM6 as well as CM2. All plasters are of high quality; well composed and well mixed. Those of the First style have clean white lime with only few lime lumps while the samples of the Third had white lime with some larger lumps.

Fig.48. Casa del Marinaio. View from the atrium towards fauces and the entrance.
Regio VIII: The Temple of Venus

The plateau on which the temple of Venus is erected is situated at a close distance of the former harbour of Pompeii, at the exit of the river Sarno and facing the golf of Naples. Usually, the temple is regarded as dated to the foundation of the Roman colony, the goddess being the patroness of the city *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum*. Excavations made in the last decade show that the Sanctuary is much older: the Temple is in fact created at an area sacred since the archaic period. The earliest structures of *pappamonte* found underneath the temple date back to the 5th century BC. After a period of abandon, noted at many excavations, there was a new intense construction period in the late 3rd and early 2nd centuries. Archaeological finds show the archaic building was a sanctuary, possibly to Venus *Fisica*, related to the Oscan culture. At the end of the 2nd century the temple stood on a platform and was surrounded with a building, presumably a portico. At this level fragments of a First style ceiling were found, indicating the building was roofed.

In the late Augustan-early or Tiberian time there was a new period of construction and reconstructions. When foundations and standing structures collapsed due to the earthquake of 62 BC, main part of the area was demolished and foundations made for buildings in a new project was never finished.

Three fragments of wall painting found in structures sealed by a later paving at the destruction level of a 3rd century edifice, and one fragment at a level unknown during the excavation campaign in 2005 were sampled and analysed.

**Results**

Two of the fragments have plasters that belong to group 0 and two have plasters that belong to group A. Both plaster types are of high quality; the lime is clean and with few lime lumps, the proportions between lime and filler are good as is the mixture of large and small grains.

---

94 The fragments investigated were sampled during the on-going excavation in 2005, and investigation made as collaboration with the Director, prof. Emmanuele Curti, University of Matera. For documentation on samples Venus1-Venus4, see appendix.
95 Curti 2008, 47ff.
97 Curti 2008, 55.
The large house of Marcus Lucretius is located in the centre of Pompeii at the Via Stabiana, an area with natural elevations.\textsuperscript{98} House number 24 is one of the oldest buildings in the \textit{insula}, its façade in \textit{opus quadratum} and the inner walls in \textit{opus africanum}.\textsuperscript{99} Even older structures of a pre-existing building, ashlars of \textit{pappamonte}, were found during excavations at the highest levels in the north part of the plot.\textsuperscript{100} Several re-building periods have been noted, the latest of which was in the 1\textsuperscript{st} century AD, when the house was re-decorated with Fourth style paintings. An over-all adornment program was used for colours as well as mythological themes, of which motifs representing Dionysos, wine and theatre were dominating. Many central paintings were removed after excavation in 1847. Those that remain \textit{in situ} are badly decayed. Maiuri describes this as a noble house with beautiful decorations.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{98} The investigation was made in collaboration with the Director, prof. Antero Tammisto, University of Helsinki. For documentation regarding samples ML1-ML16, see appendix.
\textsuperscript{99} Castrén, Tammisto 2008, 333.
\textsuperscript{100} Castrén, Tammisto 2008, 331.
\textsuperscript{101} Maiuri 1955, 57f.
Among the themes depicted in *triclinium* 16 are Hercules and Omfale, flanked by scenes representing victories of Dionysos and in the side fields of each wall are paintings of Psyches and putti.\(^{102}\) In room 25, the *exedra* or summer *triclinium* to the right of the peristyle, there were, according to Schefold, painted putti, little boys playing, Amor with quiver and floating figures.\(^{103}\) The decoration was made on a white background. Only fragments showing vines with putti harvesting grapes and little boys playing remain.\(^{104}\) In room 21, the *exedra* behind the peristyle, there are paintings representing Apollo and Daphne, which Richardson attributes to the Iphigenia painter, an artist who also made the similar decoration in Casa dei Dioscuri.\(^{105}\) When all rooms were redecorated, the decorations of the First and Second styles were torn down and found fragmented, in pits in different areas, during recent excavations.

**Plasters and phases**

The plaster investigation usually starts by taking a microscopic sample from a decoration that is supposed to represent the earliest phase within the building. In Casa di Marcus Lucretius the procedure was different; some fragments of wall paintings found in trenches AA, BB, BC and BD were the first to be sampled and studied. The question posed was if it would be possible to determine to which styles these fragments belong. Only later, the walls in room 25 were sampled too. One question posed was if the plaster could be ascribed to the Third style as sometimes has been suggested, or in the Fourth style.\(^{106}\)

**Results**

5 fragments have plasters that belong to group A, subgroup Aa, indicating plasters used for early First style decorations. As in most cases regarding the First style, there is a high-quality plaster, well balanced, well mixed. It contains particles of different sizes, although most are very small. The clean white lime contains only few lime lumps. In some case, a sample has more lime, but the fillers are of the same kind; mainly small grains, angular and rounded and with a lot of crystals.

2 fragments have plasters that belong to group B, used for late First style and early Second style decorations. Most particles are rounded, there are few crystals and the average grain size is large. The lime is clean, slightly beige, with lime lumps. There is a lack of small grains. 1 fragment has a plaster that belongs to group F, used for Third style decorations. The aggregate is many-coloured and contains lots of crystals, mixed into clean white lime with some lumps. The fragment fell apart due to decomposing lime. 4 fragments have plaster that belongs to

---

\(^{102}\) Tammisto, Kuivalainen 2008, 89-99.  
\(^{103}\) Schefold 1957, 250.  
\(^{104}\) Tammisto, Kuivalainen 2008, 100.  
\(^{105}\) Richardson 2000, 130.  
\(^{106}\) Tammisto, Kuivalainen 2008, 80.
group G, indicating the Fourth style. All of the plasters in group G were frail. The lime was unclean and the aggregate consisted of a variety of crushed materials.

The earliest plaster in room 25 belongs to group F. Both samples have the same kind of lime and filler as the fragment in the same group, but the plaster *in situ* is in a better condition. Two samples in the room have plasters of the last phase, group H. It is a paler type of reused plaster, containing crushed materials in a relatively clean lime. In this case, the reused materials seem to be a “Third style-plaster”, and the lime is of a mediocre quality. The fragments belonged to decorations of the First, early Second, Third and Fourth styles. The plasters sampled *in situ* corresponded with the fragments’ plasters of the Third style, and the redecoration or repair was made in the Fourth style.

![Fig. 50. Casa di Marcus Lucretius. Room 25, west wall.](image)
The objective of taking a few samples in two rooms was to see with which period the plasters correspond. Decorations in the Third style were identified by Schefold. In room 19, triclinium, there was a late 3rd style decoration representing Triptolemos and Ceres, Prosperina and Terra, and at the east wall a painting of Bacchus and Ariadne.

Results
Sampling was made in room 109 and 112. In both rooms, the first layer of plaster belongs to group E and the last decoration to group H, indicating the rooms were decorated in the Third and redecorated in the Fourth style.

The plaster in group E is made of clean white lime with filler of many-coloured large grains and few crystals. There is, as always in this group, a lack of small grains. In room 112 the first layer applied, the rough layer is slightly sandy but the next one is of a good quality, covered with a 3 mm stucco layer. Plaster in group H is a typical reused plaster with the inclusion of crushed materials. The aggregate has a variety of grain sizes but the lime seems to be of mediocre quality, since the plaster is frail and falling apart. Plaster analyses confirms that some decorations in the house were made in the Third style. In the two rooms sampled, redecoration or repair was made in the Fourth style.

---

107 The investigation was made in collaboration with the Director, prof. Antero Tammisto, University of Helsinki. For documentation regarding samples Pap1-Pap5, see appendix.
108 Schefold 1957, 251.