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The Other Hero: Viceroy Monterrey in Literary and Figurative Sources on the 1631 Eruption of Vesuvius*

1. Introduction

Del nostro Duce pur fu tale, et tanto
L'amor, che non curando il manifesto
Rischio di morte, et angoscioso pianto,
Ond'era il tutto per tal rogo infesto:
Soura l'afflitto popol suo cotanto,
Quel Angel raro, EMANUEL fu desto
A dar la vita, a cui fu dato in sorte,
D'haver l'amara inessorabil morte.¹

The lunette frescoed by Battistello Caracciolo for the church of San Martino in Naples is one of the first images that launched the iconographic model of a heroic St Gennaro tackling the fury of Vesuvius during the eruption of December 1631. It was one of the most innovative representations, not least for the ingenious device of portraying the saint in flight in the act of stalling the uncontrollable eruption of lava, ash and lapilli (Fig. 1).² In addition to

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1. Giovanni Battista Camerlenghi, *Incendio di Vesuvio del Camerlenghi* [1632], n.p., p. 119.

2. The lunette painting was part of a fresco cycle illustrating the life and miracles of the saint. See Stefano Causa, *Battistello Caracciolo: l'opera completa*, Naples, Electa Napoli, 2000, pp. 206-207, cat. A124. For an overview of the popular iconography of St Gennaro versus Vesuvius, see Vincenzo Pacelli, "L'iconografia di S. Gennaro dalle origini al Settecento", *Campania Sacra*, 20 (1989), pp. 401-475; Pierluigi Leone de Castris, "San

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Fig. 1. Battistello Caracciolo, *St Gennaro Halts the Lava of Vesuvius*, 1631-1632, Naples, Charterhouse of San Martino, Cappella di San Gennaro.

the appearance of the saint, the painter includes in the scene two illustrious witnesses of the miraculous event, portrayed from life and recognisable not only by their physical features but also by the distinctive costumes of their office. These are the Cardinal Archbishop of Naples, Francesco III Boncompagni (1592-1641), and the Count of Monterrey, Manuel de Zúñiga Acevedo y Fonseca (1586-1653), who had been installed as viceroy in May of that year. Many of the accounts published in the aftermath of the disaster describe both men as having been particularly active in managing the emergency generated by the eruption. The archbishop took charge of the spiritual care of the people, summoning them to collective prayer for the entire duration of the disaster and opening churches and chapels for worship even at night. Likewise, the viceroy took upon himself the practical and logistic aspects, supervising a task force to provide aid in the areas directly affected by the eruption and the related seismic tremors.³

In Battistello's fresco, Archbishop Boncompagni is shown close to the baldachin, protecting the reliquary bust of the St Gennaro. He is standing with his back to the observer but with his head turned to a man on his right,

Gennaro e l'arte napoletana", in *San Gennaro tra fede, arte e mito*, exhibition catalogue (Naples, December 1997- April 1998), ed. by Pierluigi Leone de Castris, Naples, Elio de Rosa, 1997, pp. 49-91.

3. Alfonso Tortora, *L'eruzione vesuviana del 1631. Una storia d'età moderna*, Rome, Carocci, 2014.

who can plausibly be identified as the nobleman Giovan Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa.⁴ The viceroy is shown in profile standing to the left of the archbishop, but with his head and upper body slightly turned towards the exterior of the scene; he is looking outwards, almost beckoning the observer into the fresco to witness the miraculous apparition taking place in the sky. The event reputedly occurred on 17 December, when the bust and relics of the martyr saint were carried in procession through the streets of Naples. All of a sudden, the saint appeared flying upon a cloud to tackle the eruptive fury, valiantly repelling the flow of lava with an imperious gesture of his hands and diverting it towards the sea.⁵ The episode, which would soon become one of the most important prodigious tales in the memory of the Neapolitans,⁶ was said to have taken place during the most lethal phase of the eruption, as reported in numerous Vesuvian chronicles. For instance, in the *Distinta relatione* by Michelangelo Masino: “Nello istesso punto fu visto da veri servi d’Iddio San Gennaro in habito pontificio nelle vitriate del domo benedicendo il popolo por lo que è vero che per intercessione di detto Santo protettore si chiari il Monte ritirandosi indietro il fumo”.⁷

Masino does not expressly state that the archbishop and the viceroy took part in the procession, but we know from other accounts that the two most eminent public figures witnessed the extraordinary apparition in first person.⁸ This explains their presence in Battistello’s lunette, where the artist actually exploits it as an expedient both to enhance the emotional engagement of the observer and to confer authenticity on the apparition

4. Francesco Paolo Colucci, “Il cavaliere misterioso della Certosa di San Martino: una proposta per un nuovo ritratto di Giovan Battista Manso marchese di Villa”, *Napoli Nobilissima*, 7/1-1 (January-April 2015), pp. 27-37.

5. Riccardo Lattuada, “Le Vésuve, Naples et la région à l’époque moderne: Éruption volcanique et tremblements de terre”, in *Les catastrophes naturelles dans l’Europe médiévale et moderne*, ed. by Bartolomé Bennassar, Toulouse, Presses Universitaires du Midi, 1996, pp. 95-114: 96. On the importance of the gesture in the relationship between visual communication and devotion, the bibliography is extensive and articulated. For instance, see Ottavia Niccoli, *Vedere con gli occhi del cuore. Alle origini del potere delle immagini*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2011.

6. Francesco Paolo de Ceglia, *Il segreto di san Gennaro. Storia naturale di un miracolo napoletano*, Turin, Einaudi, 2016.

7. Michelangelo Masino, *Distinta relatione dell’incendio del seuo Vesuuio alli 16 di decembre 1631 successo*, Naples, Gio. Domenico Roncagliolo, 1632.

8. Francesco Capecelatro, *Degli annali della Città di Napoli (1631-1640)*, Naples, dalla Tipografia di Reale, 1849, pp. 5-6.

that is taking place. This is also the principal novelty Battistello introduced compared to other coeval images of the 1631 eruption, first and foremost the lunette on the same subject frescoed by Domenichino in the Cappella del Tesoro in the cathedral.⁹

In this lunette, far from being simply another witness, the viceroy appears to be the fulcrum of the visual dialogue set up between the interior and exterior of the scene. This compositional device was quite frequent in historical painting, and was not an isolated case in the figurative production devoted to Vesuvius either. One of the most successful examples can be found in the church of Santa Maria la Nova in Naples, in a scene belonging to the fresco cycle produced by Massimo Stanzione around 1644-1646 for the Cappellone di San Giacomo della Marca.¹⁰ The artist used this expedient to illustrate another prodigious episode that also took place during the dramatic days of the eruption. St Giacomo della Marca was another illustrious heavenly protector of the Neapolitan people¹¹ and, on 19 December, while his incorrupt body was being carried in procession towards the areas struck by the disaster, the eruptive activity suddenly ceased (Fig. 2).¹² Here, again, the

9. In Domenichino's lunette, apart from the upper part in which the apparition of the saint is rendered in a manner similar to that of Battistello, albeit reversed, the earthly scene is occupied by groups of figures being assisted by Franciscan friars. The novel element is the gesture with which the saint blesses the mountain at the height of its eruptive violence, which rapidly became an ideal template for the heroic gesture of the martyr against the forces of nature, setting an iconographic precedent that many artists strove to equal. See Denise Maria Pagano, "Domenichino alla cappella del Tesoro di San Gennaro", in *Domenichino 1581-1641*, Milan, Electa, 1996, pp. 349-367.

10. Sebastian Schütze, "Scene della vita di San Giacomo della Marca", in Sebastian Schütze, Thomas Willette, *Massimo Stanzione: opera completa*, Naples, Electa, 1992, pp. 234-235, cat. A88.

11. See Luigi Abetti, "La 'costruzione' di un culto. Nascita e sviluppo del culto di San Giacomo della Marca", in *Gemma Lucens. Giacomo della Marca tra devozione e santità*, ed. by Fulvia Serpico, Florence, Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, pp. 93-140. For an overview of the patron saints of Naples, and in particular of the promotion in the modern age of St Gennaro and others specialised in protection against calamities, see Elisa Novi Chavarría, Vittoria Fiorelli, "I santi del Vesuvio", in *Alla scoperta del Vesuvio*, exhibition catalog (Ercolano-Naples, 2006), Naples, Electa Napoli, 2006, pp. 69-77.

12. "Al comparire del glorioso Corpo, fuori della città, à vista della nube spaventosa, subito se ne tornò indietro, voltandosi alla marina, lasciando la Città con grande allegrezza e giubilo": *Vera relatione dell'horribil caso et incendio. Occorso per l'esalatione dal Monte di Somma, detto Vessuvio vicino alla Città di Napoli. Da Martedì 16 di dicembre 1631 sino al seguente Martedì 23, del detto mese. Venuta da Napoli con altri particolari saputi per diverse lettere*, Florence, Pietro Nesti al Sole [1632], n.p.

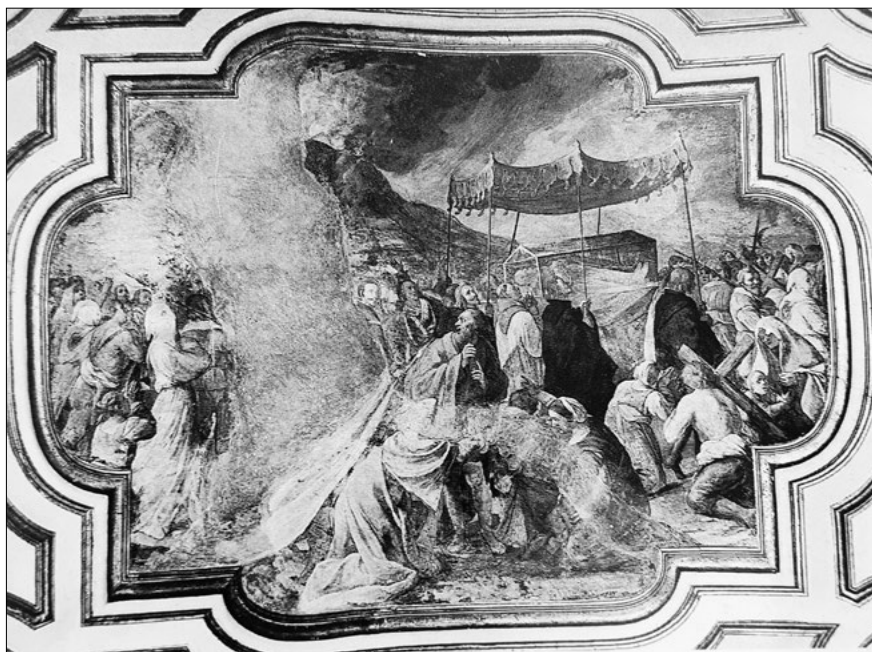


Fig. 2. Massimo Stanzione, *The Body of St Giacomo della Marca Carried in Procession in Naples at the Time of the Eruption of Vesuvius*, 1644-1646, Naples, Church of Santa Maria la Nova, Cappellone di San Giacomo della Marca.

Spanish viceroy, who was present in person at the religious celebration and an eyewitness of the miracle worked by the saint, acts as mediator between the painted scene and the observer, while at the same time confirming that what is shown in the painting actually took place.

An even more effective use of this device was made by Domenico Gargiulo, known as Micco Spadaro (1609-1675), in a painting executed between 1656 and 1660, originating from a private collection and recently acquired by the Certosa and Museo di San Martino.¹³ The miracle portrayed is that already addressed by Battistello, namely the interruption of eruptive

13. Roberto Pane, "La processione del 1631 per l'eruzione del Vesuvio, in un quadro di Micco Spadaro", in *Seicento napoletano: arte, costume e ambiente*, ed. by Roberto Pane, Milan, Edizioni di Comunità, 1984, pp. 515-517; *Micco Spadaro a San Martino: una nuova acquisizione*, ed. by Fernanda Capobianco and Rita Pastorelli, Naples, Arte'm, 2016.

activity on 17 December through the intervention of St Gennaro. This time, however, the scene is shown from a raised bird's eye view over the clearing outside Porta Capuana. The different angle allowed the artist to theatrically frame the swarming multitude of citizens that thronged to the procession. Once again, the viceroy is the only person to fix his gaze on the observer, despite being totally immersed in the dense human mass, engaged along with other dignitaries and Archbishop Boncompagni in escorting the baldachin protecting the relics of the martyr. The crowd has gathered to witness the redemptive intervention of St Gennaro, who duly appears intrepidly in the upper part of the composition. Here, too, recourse is made to the by then codified formula of the saint portrayed anachronistically as a superhero challenging the destructive violence of the volcano.¹⁴

The pictorial examples mentioned so far suggest that the Count of Monterrey occupied a somewhat secondary role during the terrible days of the eruption. The main subject of these images is the prodigious phenomenon that, in effect, put an end to the disaster, and the viceroy's presence appears to be functional solely to recording his participation as an example of devotion during the occasions of collective prayer. However, this observation is called into question by the figurative sources consisting of engravings, where the viceroy is presented in his official role as the person appointed to govern the kingdom and, consequently, as the principal figure in the management of the emergency caused by the catastrophe.

2. *The other hero: the viceroy*

In the weeks following the eruption, dozens of *avvisi* and *ragguagli* on the tragic calamity were produced and circulated from the principal Naples printing works. These pamphlets contained more or less detailed information about the explosions of the volcano and the related seismic movements, as well as the general state of fear and confusion among the Neapolitans in the face of this natural upheaval.¹⁵ Among the accounts,

14. For this felicitous comparison, see Haraldur Sigurdsson, *Melting the Earth: The History of Ideas on Volcanic Eruptions*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 98.

15. Gennaro Schiano, *Relatar la catástrofe en el Siglo de Oro. Entre noticia y narración*, Berlin, Peter Lang, 2021, pp. 107-137. For a general overview of printed news on disasters in Naples in the 17th century, see Domenico Cecere, "Informare e stupire. Racconti di calamità nella Napoli del XVII secolo", in *L'Europa moderna e l'antico Vesuvio*.

those of an official character contain explicit references to the initiatives taken by the viceroy to address the emergency, which were obviously seen in an extremely positive light.¹⁶ The publications in question, written in both Italian and Spanish, are actually quite varied in terms of type and genre. In addition to the dedications celebrating the deeds of the viceroy, some of them also include interesting paratextual elements at the beginning, such as the heraldic crest of the Count of Monterrey or a portrait of him in official dress, which visually reinforce the propagandist import of the publication. Obviously, in these texts St Gennaro is always mentioned and celebrated as the heavenly hero of the disaster; nevertheless, reference to the celestial input goes hand in hand with the expression of profound esteem and gratitude towards the viceroy, at times also accompanied by words of praise for the archbishop.

Among the most interesting printed works including illustrations, we must mention the *Incendio di Vesuvio* by Giovanni Battista Camerlenghi (Fig. 3).¹⁷ This is a remarkable composition in *ottava rima* dedicated to the viceroy, with a fine title page attributed to the French engraver Nicolas Perrey (1596-1661).¹⁸ Here, the celebratory aspect

Sull'identità scientifica italiana tra i secoli XVII e XVIII. Atti del Seminario internazionale di Studi (Fisciano 15 settembre 2015), ed. by Alfonso Tortora, Domenico Cassano and Sean Cocco, Battipaglia, Lavegliacarlone, 2017, pp. 63-77.

16. "Atendia a todas partes la vigilancia del Excelentísimo Conde de Monterrei, que gobernaba el Reino con aplausos, i socorria con obras", Fernando [Isaac] Cardoso, *Discurso sobre el monte Vesuvio, insigne por sus ruinas, famoso por la muerte de Plinio: del prodigioso incendio del año passado de 1631 i de sus causas naturales, i el origen verdadero de los terremotos, vientos, i tempestades*, Madrid, por Francisco Martínez, 1632, p. 9. More representative texts are indicated in the following remarks. See Laura Rodríguez Fernández, "La catástrofe del Vesubio de 1631 y sus repercusiones en el ámbito editorial hispánico contemporáneo", *Annali dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli l'Orientale, Sezione Romanza*, 54/1 (2012), pp. 97-121.

17. Camerlenghi, *Incendio di Vesuvio*.

18. Nicolas Perrey was born in Salins in Burgundy and is documented in Rome around 1613 and then in Naples from 1616-1617, where he lived up to his death and where almost all of his abundant graphic production is concentrated. He was an attentive witness of many of the crucial events in Neapolitan history, including numerous catastrophes, and is considered a key figure for an understanding of the genesis of the 17th-century image of Vesuvius in print. For a biographical profile, see: Francesco Lofano, "L'eruzione del Vesuvio del 1631 e Nicolas Perrey. Novità e riflessioni sul percorso di un malnoto pittore", in *Napoli e il Gigante. Il Vesuvio tra immagine, scrittura e memoria*, ed. by Rosa Casapullo and Lorenza Gianfrancesco, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2014, pp. 209-235; Ana Minguito Palomares,



Fig. 3. Nicolas Perrey, title page of the work by Giovanni Battista Camerlenghi [1632], *Incendio di Vesuvio del Camerlenghi*, s.l., s.n. Exemplar consulted: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 Phys.sp. 209 r.

dominates decisively over the descriptive: two-thirds of the page are in fact occupied by the large coat of arms of the Zúñiga-Fonseca dynasty, flanked by two pairs of allegorical figures who can be recognised by their attributes. These personify the virtuous qualities of the dedicatee: Strength and Justice to the left, Prudence and Temperance to the right. The scene is symbolically completed by a fifth figure at the top personifying Fame. The calamitous event is instead relegated to the lower part of the page, which shows a somewhat simplified image of the legendary double cone of the volcano, seen frontally from the sea, as was customary.¹⁹

The intentional celebration of the Spanish nobleman that can be discerned in the title page continues on the following page with one of the most famous portraits of the count signed by Perrey.²⁰ This shows close stylistic affinities with a slightly earlier version, again by Perrey, produced for the chronicle *Descrittione dell'apparato fatto nella festa di S. Giovanni*, written by Gianbernardino Giuliani.²¹ The portrait published in Camerlenghi's work reveals several compositional variations, such as the square rather than oval frame, the official dress instead of armour, and the inclusion of the key alluding to the rank of *gentilhombre de cámara* (Gentleman of the Bedchamber). It also features an interesting Latin couplet which seems to express in words what is visually represented on

"Nicolás Perrey y el uso del grabado en la construcción de la imagen del virreinato de Nápoles durante el siglo XVII. Compendio y documentación de nuevas obras", *Janus*, 9 (2020), pp. 221-274; Vincenzo Palmisciano, "Sulla biografia dell'incisore Nicolas Perrey (con novità su Orazio Colombo)", *Studi secenteschi*, 61, (2020), pp. 298-304.

19. On the iconic representation of the smouldering Vesuvius, see the observations of Elisa Castorina, "*Vesuvi ardenti*": la ricezione poetica dell'eruzione del 1631 nella letteratura barocca, PhD dissertation, Naples, Università di Napoli Federico II, 2008, pp. 518-538.

20. On the graphic, painted and sculptural portraits of the Count of Monterrey, see Ángel Rivas Albaladejo, *Entre Madrid, Roma y Nápoles. El VI conde de Monterrey y el gobierno de la Monarquía Hispánica (1621-1653)*, PhD dissertation, Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, 2015, pp. 358-360, 389-390, 397-399, 543, 549-555, 577-578.

21. Gianbernardino Giuliani, *Descrittione dell'apparato fatto nella festa di S. Giovanni dal fedelissimo popolo napolitano*, Naples, Domenico Maccarano, 1631. In 2014, Francesco Lofano hypothesised the derivation of this portrait from a painted version still to be traced (Lofano, "L'eruzione del Vesuvio", p. 221). Based on the corpus of portraits of Monterrey, the reference model for this one, and for the other versions engraved by Perrey, must be that made by Diego Velázquez during his sojourn in Rome, as proposed here. This portrait, now lost, is known through a copy belonging to the Marquis of Leganés; it, too, was long considered lost but recently resurfaced on the Madrid antiques market (*Durán Arte y Subastas*, Subasta 579, 19 December 2019, lot 58).

the title page: *Arsit atrox ignis, decrevit in ima Vesevus / Arsit Amor, sed Mons erevit in astra tuus*. Here the viceroy and the volcano are placed in a distinct, but inversely proportionate, relationship: as Vesuvius declines, the glory of the count is destined to rise.

As noted, this propaganda-type editorial production was intended to give visibility to the swift action the viceroy took in the earliest months of his mandate. At the same time, it also met the urgent need to counter the rumours that were circulating in Naples suggesting that the earthquake was to be read as a sign of the anger of God and of St Gennaro, aroused by the deplorable conduct of the vice-regal government.²² The authors of these *relazioni* therefore took pains to consistently stress the estimable spirituality professed by Manuel de Zúñiga, as demonstrated by his assiduous attendance at the occasions of collective prayer coordinated by Archbishop Boncompagni. These started with the procession convened by the archbishop on 16 December just a few hours after the start of the catastrophe, as mentioned in the chronicle *Los incendios de la montaña de Soma*, the author of which is unspecified but tends to be identified by critics as the intellectual Francisco de Alegría.²³ The account also refers to the viceroy's poor state of health during the terrible days of the eruption, stressing how this had in no manner prevented him from attending the religious services.²⁴ This aspect was also pointed out by other contemporaries, such as Gianbernardino Giuliani, who wrote:

22. Tortora, *L'eruzione vesuviana*; Lorenza Gianfrancesco, "Vesuvio e società: informazione, propaganda e dibattito intellettuale a Napoli nel primo Seicento", in *Napoli e il Gigante*, pp. 55-91; Lorenza Gianfrancesco, "Narrative and Representation of a Disaster in Early Seventeenth-Century Naples", in *Disaster Narratives in Early Modern Naples: Politics, Communication and Culture*, ed. by Domenico Cecere, Chiara De Caprio, Lorenza Gianfrancesco and Pasquale Palmieri, Rome, Viella, 2018, pp. 163-186.

23. Francisco de Alegría, *Los incendios de la montaña de Soma*, Naples, Egidio Longo, 1632. See also Laura Rodríguez Fernández, *El Vesubio en llamas: un texto napolitano en español sobre la erupción de 1631. Los incendios de la montaña de Soma (Nápoles, 1632)*, Naples, Tullio Pironti, 2014.

24. Rodríguez Fernández, *El Vesubio en llamas*, p. 157. See also what is recorded in the *Relacion de los socorros de gente, y dinero con que el excellentissimo senor conde de Monterey a asistido a diferentes partes* [1636], n.p., presumably published in Naples in 1636 on the viceroy's own initiative, the content of which is also literally cited in the diary of the ceremonies of the Palazzo Reale compiled by Jusepe Renao. See Ángel Rivas Albaladejo, "Jusepe Renao e la Napoli vicereale del Seicento. Portieri di camera e maestri di cerimonie", in *Cerimoniale del Vicereame Spagnolo di Napoli 1535-1637*, ed. by Attilio Antonelli, Naples, Art'm, 2019, pp. 45-73: 53-54.

Il Signor Viceré non volle giamai, col suo magnanimo, et intrepido cuore, abbandonare in una così grande, et universal paura, il suo Palazzo reale, benché da molti istigato grandemente ne fosse: anzi tenne mai sempre à tutte l'hore di giorno, e di notte le porte aperte à chiunque voleva seco trattare ò sopra i bisogni correnti dell'Incendio [...] ancora che talvolta egli se ne stesse à letto, cagionevole della persona.²⁵

However, the most striking aspect that emerges from a reading of these accounts relates to certain practical measures ordered by the “provident” viceroy that are also illustrated in some of the coeval graphic production. Immediately after the first violent quakes, the viceroy ordered *Deputati della Salute* to be sent to the places directly affected by the explosions to make an initial assessment of the situation and to avert the danger of epidemic arising from the “fetide materie” spouted forth by the volcano along with ashes and lapilli.²⁶ This first reconnaissance was followed by a second, presided over by three Spanish officials who were sent respectively to the areas of Pozzuoli, Capua and Somma.²⁷ Once the viceroy had grasped the level of criticality in the various territories, he decided to concentrate the aid operations in the areas worst hit at the foot of the volcano. These procedures involved both the homeless who had crossed the Maddalena bridge and who sought to reach the capital on foot, and those who had been overcome by panic and who had attempted to escape by sea. For the latter, a key element in the operations aimed at saving the survivors were the two viceregal galleys fitted out to serve as hospital ships that were sent from Naples: “Il Vice Rè hà mandato le galere per salvare alcuni, che stavano nudi sopra gli scogli, e come vedevano venire il fuoco si buttavano in mare, e ne sono morti molti”.²⁸

25. Gianbernardino Giuliani, *Trattato del Monte Vesuvio e de' suoi incendi*, Naples, Egidio Longo, 1632, p. 81.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69, 74-75.

27. Antonio Bulifon, *Giornali di Napoli dal 1547 al 1706*, ed. by Nino Cortese, Naples, Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, 1932, pp. 152-153.

28. *Vera relatione dell'horribil caso*, n.p. On the sending of the galleys, see, in particular: Giovanni Orlandi, *Nuoua, e compita relatione del spauenteuole incendio del Monte di Somma detto il Vesuuio. Doue s'intende minutamente tutto quello che e successo fin'al presente giorno, con la nota di quante volte detto Monte si sia abbrugiato*, Naples, Lazzaro Scoriggio, 1632, p. 15; Padre Agostiniano Capradosso, *Il lagrimevole auuenimento dell'incendio del monte Vesuvio per la Città di Napoli*, Naples, Egidio Longo, 1631, n.p.; Simon de Ayala, *Copiosissima y verdadera relacion del incendio del monte Vesuvio* [...], Naples, Ottavio Beltrano, 1632, n.p.

The importance given to the measures taken by the Count of Monterrey, and in particular to the galleys sent to the places overwhelmed by the disaster, again reflects the propagandist intention of these accounts. They were designed to set the spotlight on the diligence of the viceroy who, despite being distant from the epicentre of the disaster, reacted decisively to the state of emergency that threatened the kingdom and its inhabitants. The official reporter Favella compared the viceroy to the Emperor Titus – who had heroically addressed the other great eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE – and he appeared to have all the credentials to embody the virtues of the earthly hero of the disaster.²⁹ In actual fact, the eulogies of the count so clearly enshrined in the accounts considered so far were matched in other coeval publications, in particular in a series of poems, including *ottava rima*, and prose compositions echoing such praise of the commendable conduct of the Spanish nobleman in these critical circumstances.³⁰

Returning to the figurative documents, the vast iconographic repertory concerning the 1631 eruption of Vesuvius does not appear to include any specific formulation of the viceroy in action. In fact, there are hardly any images portraying his contribution to resolving the calamity. The artists' attention was mostly focused on the figure of St Gennaro, the true hero of the event, who was capable of directly tackling the forces of nature represented by the flaming mountain. The only exception to this trend is in the sphere of graphic production, more specifically in a portrayal of the Vesuvian landscape produced through chalcography. Judging by the replicas that have survived, such illustrations were apparently very popular not only in Naples but also in Spain.

In the current state of knowledge, the identification of the *editio princeps* continues to be very problematic, as is the identification of the author, so that all the known versions have to be considered on par. Based on what is stated in the respective captions, the aim was to provide a “true drawing” or

29. Giovanni Geronimo Favella, *Abbozzo delle ruine fatte dal monte di Somma con il seguito insino ad hoggi 23 di gennaro 1632*, Naples, Secondino Roncaglio, 1632. See also Gianfrancesco, “Narrative and Representation”, pp. 174-175; Camerlenghi, *Incendio di Vesuvio*, p. 120.

30. Laura Rodríguez Fernández, “La erupción del Vesubio de 1631 en la imprenta napolitana en lengua castellana: Los incendios de la montaña de Soma (Nápoles, Egidio Longo, 1632)”, in *Lingua spagnola e cultura ispanica a Napoli fra Rinascimento e barocco: testimonianze a stampa Materia hispanica*, ed. by Encarnación Sánchez García, Naples, Tullio Pironti, 2013, pp. 223-239: 232-233.

a “true portrait” of the Vesuvian conflagration and the damage it had caused. The surviving exemplars are all basically the same size (c. 22 x 32 cm) and are all on single sheets rather than part of a more structured book production. They feature a chorographic view of the Vesuvian landscape taken from the west, where most of the space is occupied by the double cone shown in the eruptive phase. Various groups of buildings in the immediate vicinity are depicted, corresponding to the places that were overwhelmed by the lava. A key is inserted in the right margin of the image to facilitate identification, with textual elements positioned close to the buildings for the same purpose. For instance, the indication of the church of Santa Maria del Soccorso, the only site spared by the lava flow (“miracolosamente si fermò il fuoco che veneva verso Napoli, et in detta chiesa si salvarono da cento persone”).

In addition to this information, sometimes the names of the engraver/printer or dedicatee also appear. Although there is no reference to the place of printing, this can reasonably be assumed to be one of the principal printing works in Naples – or Rome – that were specialised in the production of texts and images on the subject of disasters. As regards the execution, despite some slight variations – for instance, in the graphic rendering of the lava flows, the clouds of smoke, the waves in the sea or the drawing of the buildings – the various exemplars can be traced to a single prototype which, as mentioned, remains to be identified.

Apropos the author, he would appear to have been abreast of the perspective innovations employed in the various Vesuvian landscapes produced over time by the aforementioned Nicolas Perrey, such as the one with St Gennaro that accompanied the *Epistola isagogica* by Gregorio Carafa³¹ and the pair of engravings illustrating the volcano before and after the eruption,³² published first in the *Trattato del Monte Vesuvio e de' suoi incendi* by Giamberardino Giuliani³³ and later in the *De incendio Vesuuii*

31. Gregorio Carafa, *In opusculum de novissima Vesuvii conflagratione, epistola isagogica*, Naples, Egidio Longo, 1632. The image of the crest of the Theatine Order crowned by three putti that appears in the frontispiece is also by Perrey.

32. This iconographic formula has been addressed by Vera Fionie Koppenleitner, *Katastrophenbilder: der Vesuvausbruch 1631 in den Bildkünsten der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2018, pp. 53-57, 84-91.

33. Giuliani, *Trattato del Monte Vesuvio*. In this case, too, Nicolas Perrey was responsible not only for these two engravings but also for the title page showing the crest of the Count-Duke of Olivares crowned by three putti.

excitato by Giovanni Battista Mascolo.³⁴ In addition to these prints, which are frequently cited in coeval sources for the naturalistic rendering that was the result of direct observation, it is known that the artist produced at least one other pair of before and after Vesuvian landscapes that were even more finely worked than those made for Giuliani's treatise and that were framed from a raised viewpoint.³⁵

Of the variants identified to date, the one that boasts the largest number of surviving copies, suggesting that it may have enjoyed a broader circulation than others, can be identified by the caption running along the lower edge of the image: *Vero disegno dell'incendio nella Montagna di Somma altrimenti detto Mons Vesuvii distante da Napoli sei miglia, a 16 di dicembre* (Fig. 4).³⁶ At top right is an inscription that reveals the interest that was taken in Rome in the tragic events caused by the eruption. It reads: "Al Molto Ill. Sig.re il Sig.r Angelo Saluzzo mio Patrone Colendissimo / Gio. Battista Passero D.D.", where the initials D.D. (*donat et dicat*) allude to the gift made to Father Angelo Saluzzi, an Oratorian resident in Rome, by the artist Giovan Battista Passeri (1610-1679), the author and owner of the plate.³⁷

There is a variant of this *Vero disegno* bearing the dedication "Al M.to Ill.mo Sign.r il Sign.r Francesco Popoleschi Gentilomo fiorentino /

34. Giovanni Battista Mascolo, *De incendio Vesuuii excitato 17. Kal. Ianuar. Anno trigesimo primo saeculi decimiseptimi*, Naples, Secondino, Roncagliolo, 1633.

35. Bibliothèque Nationale de France (henceforth BNF) [GE DD-2987 (5583) and GE BB-246 (XIV, 54)]. Both have, in the lower section, a Latin poem dedicated to Vesuvius, probably to be referred to an author identified only as Lorenzo Longo of the Congregation of the Somascan Fathers, whose name appears in the after version of the eruption.

36. To date, five exemplars of this print have been identified: Museo di San Martino, Archivio Disegni e Stampe, fondo brogi, stipo 5, cartella 19; Biblioteca della Società Napoletana di Storia Patria (henceforth SNSP); BNF, GE DD-2987 (5582); Bibliothèques du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Collection iconographique de la datation Krafft, IC KR 20; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ALB Vues 07811. A sixth, watercoloured, exemplar has been identified in the BNF by Emanuela Guidoboni, "Vesuvius: A Historical Approach to the 1631 Eruption: 'Cold Data' from the Analysis of Three Contemporary Treatises", *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research*, 178/3 (2008), pp. 347-358: 355, Fig. 2. It has also been published by Lina Scalisi in *Per riparar l'incendio. Le politiche dell'emergenza dal Perù al Mediterraneo. Huaynaputina 1600 - Vesuvio 1631 - Etna 1669*, Catania, Domenico Sanfilippo Editore, 2013, Fig. 8.

37. This information is derived from the signature "Gio. Battista Passaru Formis Neap." in the lower right-hand corner of the sheet. On Angelo Saluzzi (1566-1654), again see Koppenleitner, *Katastrophenbilder*, p. 70.

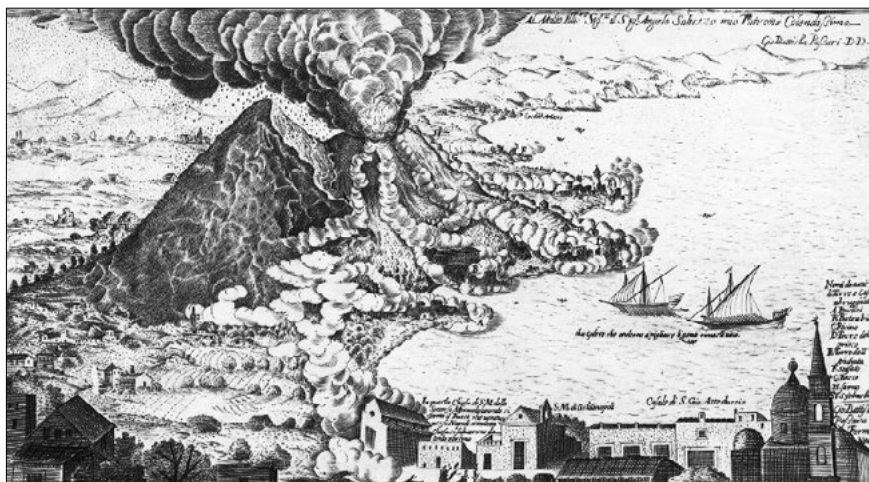


Fig. 4. Giovan Battista Passeri, *View of the Bay of Naples with Vesuvius in Eruption*, c. 1632. Exemplar consulted: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ALB Vues 07811.

Gio. Orlandi D.D.D.”³⁸ This version was produced by the printer Giovanni Orlandi, active between Rome and Naples in the first half of the 17th century.³⁹ It includes, at top right, a bust of St Gennaro appearing aloft on a cloud in the act of blessing the volcano.⁴⁰

Also to be referred to Orlandi is a further variant entitled *VERO RITRATTO DELL'INCENDIO [...]* (Fig. 5).⁴¹ Here, the same image of the eruption – in a more schematic but equally effective rendering – accompanies a manuscript

38. BNF, GE DD-655 (104RES). There are no further details available on the “gentleman” Popoleschi.

39. Anna Omodeo, *Grafica napoletana del '600. Fabbricatori di immagini: saggio sugli incisori, illustratori, stampatori e librai della Napoli del Seicento*, Naples, Regina, 1981, p. 16; Paola Carla Verde, “L’Iconografia asservita al potere. L’opera e i committenti dell’incisore e topografo Alessandro Baratta alla corte vicerale di Napoli nella prima metà del XVII secolo”, *Librosdelacorte.es*, 13/8 (2016); Koppenleitner, *Katastrophenbilder*, pp. 62-72.

40. This element may have been inspired by Perrey’s invention for Carafa’s treatise.

41. *VERO RITRATTO DELL'INCENDIO DELLA MONTAGNA DI SOMMA. ALTAMENTE detto Mons Vesuii, distante da Napoli sei miglia, successo alli 16 Xmbre 1631*. Naples, SNSP, SISMICA, Atlanti 018 (2). The cited fascicle contains two newssheets published in the Germanic area, one of which follows the *mise en page* of this sheet while reworking the scene in a more expressive manner. My thanks to Annachiara Monaco for having pointed this out.

copy of the letter from the printer to Nicolò Enriquez de Herrera, apostolic nuncio in Naples from 1630 to 1636, which he had published in another sheet titled *Miserando successo e spaventevole occorso nelli 16 di Xbre nel monte Vesevo detto Soma*.⁴²

The composition featured in the variants presented here also enjoyed success outside Italy, particularly in Spain. This is confirmed by the image contained in the compendium *El monte Vesuvio, aora la montaña de Soma*, published in Madrid in 1632.⁴³ As the author Juan de Quiñones explains in the introduction, this work is a compilation of manuscript and printed sources originating from Naples and translated from Italian into Spanish. Here, the chalcography is inserted in the text where it serves as a useful visual supplement, illustrating to the Spanish reader the context in which the disaster took place. Obviously, the key and the textual elements of the image are translated into Spanish, as is the long caption at the bottom of the sheet – *Verdadero retrato del Incendio de la montaña de Soma llamada antiguamente el monte Vesuvio distante de Nap.^s dos leguas* – completed by the author's dedication to the monarch, Philip IV (Fig. 6). Also inserted in the lower right margin is the signature of the engraver, Jean de Courbes, a prolific French *escultor de láminas* active in Spain from 1620.⁴⁴

The particular interest of the prints of the drawing/portrait described in this rapid overview is the inclusion of several elements conceived – albeit symbolically – to give visibility to the viceroy's authority, namely, the galleys sent from Naples to assist the victims that were so frequently mentioned in the printed reports. The vessels are positioned in the sea, one behind the other, and appear to be heading towards the coast. A short note is added to facilitate identification of the ships: “Due galere che andarono a pigliare li genti rimasti vivi” (in Spanish in the version engraved by De Courbes). This detail is completely missing from the

42. Paolo Gasparini, Silvana Musella, *Un viaggio al Vesuvio. Il Vesuvio visto attraverso diari, lettere e resoconti di viaggiatori*, Naples, Liguori Editore, 1991, pp. 282, 410.

43. Juan de Quiñones, *El monte Vesuvio, aora la montaña de Soma*, Madrid, Juan González, 1632.

44. José Manuel Matilla, *La estampa en el libro barroco. Juan de Courbes*, Vitoria-Gasteiz-Madrid, Instituto Municipal de Estudios Iconográficos Ephialte-Caligrafía Nacional, 1991; *Grabadores extranjeros en la Corte española del Barroco*, ed. by Javier Blas, María Cruz de Carlos Varona and José Manuel Matilla, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España-Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2011, p. 26.

other words, the idea is to represent the crucial and timely involvement of viceregal power in the aid operations: the vital initiative was launched at the very moment when the people affected by the explosions and the mudslides risked being isolated by the lava flowing relentlessly from the mountain to the sea, in effect blocking all possible ways of escape.

In view of this intention, it cannot be ruled out that Viceroy Monterrey himself may even have been behind the choice of this composition with its dense political significance, perhaps in the conviction that immortalising the heroic salvage operations carried out by the viceregal vessels would be bound to boost the popularity of viceregal authority. If this were the case, these prints would have to be seen as an evident continuation of the intent revealed in the official printed *avvisi* and in other propaganda initiatives such as those which, making use of materials much more lasting than paper, were to leave an indelible trace of the viceroy's heroic gestures in the memory of the inhabitants of the area of Vesuvius.

3. Recollection of the event: the viceroy as commissioner of the Vesuvian memorials

The end of the catastrophe ushered in a period of intensive reconstruction in the areas where the violence of the eruption had destroyed houses and palaces and seriously jeopardised communication routes. Sites of worship were also restored and equipped with new images of Our Lady, and especially of St Gennaro, who was from that time on seen as the celestial agent most efficacious against all species of calamity, and particularly against the eruptive phenomena that were to continue to threaten the territory for many decades. Effigies of the saint sculpted in stone or modelled in terracotta also began to be erected in the open air, generally positioned facing Vesuvius and showing Gennaro either blessing or repelling the infernal mountain.

In this context of general recovery and of new stimulus for civic religiosity, the viceregal authority too wished to leave a tangible reminder of the disaster through an initiative that displayed intentions of both strong commemorative value and self-aggrandisement. Manuel de Zúñiga duly erected two monumental memorials in the towns of Portici and Torre del Greco (1635-1636), which curious travellers can still see today. Both of these installations were part of a larger campaign conceived to celebrate

his person and his actions as viceroy, which also involved the capital of the kingdom through a series of commissions for urban decor.⁴⁷

The Portici monument consists of an austere marble slab, located at what is now the intersection between Corso Garibaldi and Via Gianturco, bearing a Latin inscription that goes beyond exhorting posterity to defending itself against the danger of the nearby volcano. Indeed, after a series of recommendations to take rapidly to one's heels in the event of eruption, it also recalls the importance of the humanitarian aid provided at the time by Viceroy Monterrey. A similar eulogy of the greatheartedness of the viceroy emerges in the Torre del Greco memorial, incorporated into a monument that includes an older plaque erected in what is now Via Nazionale.⁴⁸ This decidedly more impressive monument consists of a large panel of lava stone 21 metres tall containing within three coats of arms and the two marble memorials. The spolia plaque dates to 1562, the year in which it was erected by the then viceroy, Pedro Afán de Ribera, Duke of Alcalá (1559-1571), to mark the opening of the Strada Regia. After being buried beneath the mud flows during the eruption of 1631, it was then retrieved and incorporated into the new monument, illustrating the Count of Monterrey's desire to similarly honour the initiative of his predecessor in the previous century. This intention is reinforced by the presence of the coats of arms of the two viceroys, set alongside each other and surmounted by two obelisks in lava stone, in the centre of which are the magnificent royal arms of the monarch, Philip IV.

News of the erection of these memorials was not circumscribed to the places directly involved in the initiative and must have been given considerable coverage through transcriptions included in the guides and in the biographies of Monterrey. It is, for instance, mentioned in the *Teatro eroico* by the biographer Domenico Antonio Parrino, a

47. Katrin Zimmermann, "Il viceré VI conte di Monterrey. Mecenate e committente a Napoli (1631-1637)", in *España y Nápoles: coleccionismo y mecenazgo virreinales en el siglo XVII*, ed. by José Luis Colomer, Madrid, Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2009, pp. 277-292: 287.

48. "EMMANUEL FONSECA ET ZUNICA COM.MONT.REG.PROR. / QUA ANIMI MAGNITUDE PUBLICAE CALAMITATI / E A PRIVATAE CONSULUIT / EXTRACTUM FUNDITUS GENTILIS SUI LAPIDEM / COELO RESTITUIT VIAM REASTAURAVIT / FUMANTE ADHUC ET INDIGNANTE VESEVO". See Giovanni P. Ricciardi, *Diario del monte Vesuvio. Venti secoli di immagini e cronache di un vulcano nella città*, 3 vols, vol. II, Naples, Edizioni scientifiche e artistiche, 2009, pp. 253-254.

work that circulated widely even beyond the borders of the kingdom and that was certainly instrumental in informing a broad public of the viceroy's prompt and brave action in addressing the terrible disaster.⁴⁹ Shortly before Parrino, the chronicler Pompeo Sarnelli also provided a description in of his famous *Guida de' forestieri*,⁵⁰ which includes, in the 1685 edition, an illustration by Antonio Bulifon showing the Portici memorial (Fig. 7) published alongside a small image of Vesuvius by Giovanna Dorotea Pesche. The plaque occupies almost half the surface of the page, set within a landscape view that is easily recognisable by the double cone of Vesuvius in the background and the by then customary pinnacle of smoke. In the left foreground are three figures, most probably two visitors and a guide who, pointing at the inscription, is telling them about the events recorded in the memorial.⁵¹

4. Conclusion

A consideration of the examples examined suggests some concluding remarks that cast new light on the heroic portrayal of the viceroy linked to the 1631 eruption of Vesuvius. It is clear that, in the figurative sphere, the need to portray the Count of Monterrey as the prime mover in the management of the emergency is expressed mostly in printed compositions. The most conspicuous case is that of the chorographic view of Vesuvius, known in various editions, where the presence of viceregal authority is

49. Domenico Antonio Parrino, *Teatro eroico, e politico de' governi de' Viceré del Regno di Napoli dal tempo del Re Ferdinando il Cattolico fino al presente*, 3 vols, vol. II, Naples, Parrino & Mutii, 1692-1694, pp. 221-224. In addition to the memorials of Portici and Torre del Greco, further on (p. 254) the author records and describes a third situated on the road to Poggio Reale, which recalls that Monterrey was also responsible for the reclamation of this area after the eruption.

50. Pompeo Sarnelli, *Guida de' forestieri: curiosi di vedere, e d'intendere le cose più notabili della regal città di Napoli, e del suo amenissimo distretto*, Naples, Giuseppe Roselli, 1685, pp. 401-402.

51. Another picturesque image of the Portici memorial can be found in the view by Paolo Petrini datable to around the turn of the century and then reprinted in Gaetano D'Amato, *Divisamento critico sulle correnti opinioni intorno a fenomeni del Vesuvio [...]*, Naples, Stamperia Abbaziana, 1756. See also Lucio Fino, *Vesuvio e Campi Flegrei. Due miti del grand tour nella grafica di tre secoli. Stampe disegni e acquerelli dal 1540 al 1876*, Naples, Grimaldi, 1993, p. 69.



Fig. 7. Antonio Bulifon, illustration for the work by Pompeo Sarnelli (1685), *Guida de' forestieri: curiosi di vedere, e d'intendere le cose più notabili della regal città di Napoli, e del suo amenissimo distretto*, Naples, Giuseppe Roselli. Exemplar consulted: Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III, RAC.NOT. B 1076.

symbolically represented by the official galleys sent to provide immediate aid to the places directly threatened by the eruption. These images are to be read in continuity with the production of *avvisi* and reports in which the viceroy is eulogised, not only for his profound devotion, but also for his exceptionally decisive response to the emergency.

On the other hand, this vision of Monterrey as the earthly hero of the disaster does not appear in the pictorial production, which seems to be markedly more inclined to frame the narration in a sacred dimension. The purpose of this is to set off the figure of St Gennaro who, as an intermediary between earth and heaven, is shown interacting directly with the volcano. In the codification of a specific iconography that pits the saint against Vesuvius, the figure of the viceroy – where included – appears to be relegated to the role of a mere eyewitness of the prodigious event, alongside the other authoritative earthly presence evoked in such representations: that of the Archbishop of Naples, Francesco Boncompagni.