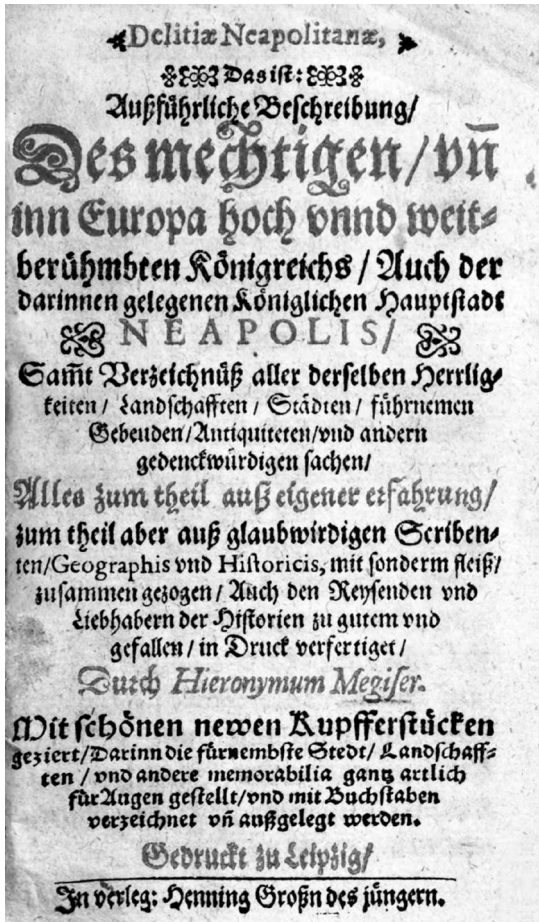


Harald Hendrix

## The Monte Nuovo Episode and the Changing Balance between Nature and Heritage in Sixteenth-Century Descriptions of Naples

To the early modern observer, Naples and its district offered a rare spectacle where imposing natural elements—its position on the sea, its geological situation as evident in the manifold volcanic phenomena—were intertwined with material recollections of antiquity able to gloriously compete with the ruins of Rome itself. While offering the local populace motives for civic pride and enticing the curiosity of visitors from outside, both these elements of nature and artistic heritage continued to fascinate observers also because they were hard to grasp and understand fully. Many of the antique rests were difficult to determine with precision, and to most the natural phenomena occurring in the area created amazement and bewilderment. At times, they were used simply for practical reasons, improving the health of some and giving pleasure to others, as was the case with the hugely popular baths in the Phlegrean area. This difficulty to grasp such an exceptionally potent combination of elements that some might as well consider to be oppositional—nature and/versus heritage/art—particularly challenged those observers interested in representing this reality, in maps and in texts. It thus particularly concerned the work of the cartographers and chorographers that in the sixteenth century started to represent Naples and its district in ever growing numbers. They needed to choose a frame of reference guiding them in this endeavour and offering elements for a coherent view on and interpretation of the city's identity able to surpass the potentially inherent conflicts informing it.

This essay seeks to explore how in the course of the sixteenth century the way people looked at Naples and its surroundings changed fundamentally. This shift entailed the move from a predominantly deductive mentality based on previous notions, mainly bookish ones, towards a much more inductive attitude based on observations and enquiries. As a consequence it redirected the observers' gaze from focusing only on those elements in reality that textual authorities had highlighted, to include also phenomena outside of that conventional framework, in the natural and cultural landscapes not yet scrutinised by those very authors. This development was not a radical one. It occurred gradually, producing over the years a hybrid mentality where various frames of reference were mobilised together, though in varying intensities depending on the objectives of the authors of the maps and the chorographies. It was however a shift that successfully undermined the



1 Hieronymus Megiser: *Delitiae Neapolitanae*, Leipzig 1605, frontispiece

dominance of a worldview based on authorities as they were expressed in texts by antique philosophers, poets and historians, giving ever more space to observation, be it direct or indirect.

A fine example of this new hybrid mentality combining notions of authority and enquiry may be found in the very title of the comprehensive chorography of the kingdom of Naples published in Leipzig in 1605 by the great scholar Hieronymus Megiser, the first of its kind produced by a non-Italian for a wide audience of visitors from abroad.<sup>1</sup> Megiser

1 Hieronymus Megiser: *Delitiae Neapolitanae*, Das ist: ausführliche Beschreibung des mechtigen / und inn Europa hoch vñnd weitberühmten Königreichs / Auch der darinnen gelegenen königlichen Hauptstadt Neapolis / Samt Verzeichnüß aller derselben Herrlichkeiten / Landschaften / Städten fühnemmen Gebeuden / Antiquiteten / und andern gedenckwürdigen Sachen / alles zum

programmatically frames his guide (fig. 1), the *Delitiae Neapolitanae*, as being the result of both his personal observations on the spot (*zum Theil auß eigener Erfahrung*) and informations gathered from authoritative texts (*zum Theil aber auß glaubwürdigen Scribenten, Geographis und Historicis*), thought to satisfy the expectations of tourists on the one hand and scholars on the other (*den Reysenden und Liebhabern der Historien zu gutem und gefallen*).<sup>2</sup>

As such, Megiser follows in the footsteps of other Northern humanists who in these very years grounded their descriptions of Italy, and Naples in particular, on a combination of personal observations and erudite references. Yet unlike his predecessors, Megiser was not very diligent in referencing the source material used for his sometimes quite detailed survey. This is evident in the passages where he reports on events he could not have witnessed in person, like the eruption of the Monte Nuovo near Pozzuoli in 1538. Megiser describes this notorious catastrophe from an eyewitness's perspective, clearly appropriating the observations from an authoritative contemporary witness, i.e. the neapolitan philosopher Simone Porzio, who in his *De conflagratione agri puteolanis* had left a detailed account of the shocking event,<sup>3</sup> adopted by Megiser without many alterations or referencing in his *Delitiae Neapolitanae*.

theil auß eigener Erfahrung / zum Theil aber auß glaubwürdigen Scribenten / *Geographis und Historicis*, mit sonderm Fleiß zusammen gezogen / Auch den Reysenden und Liebhabern der Historien zu gutem und gefallen / in Druck verfertigt durch Hieronymum Megiser. Mit schönen neuen Kupferstücken geziert / Darinn die fürnembste Stedt / Landschafften / und andere memorabilia ganz artlich für Augen gestellt / und mit Buchstaben verzeichnet und außgelegt werden, Leipzig [1605].

- 2 In his dedicatory letter to Heinrich II Reuss, dated October 1, 1605 (*ibid.*, foll. 3–4), Megiser repeats his objective: “[...] gegenwertige Beschreibung des Königreichs Neapolis welche Ich jüngst auff bitt ettlich meiner guten Freunde, zum Theil auß meiner eignen Reyseverzeichnüssen, unnd zum Theil auch auß andern Authoribus in Eil also zusammen gebracht [...]” Megiser had extensive travel experience, gathered mainly in the late 1580s and early 1590s, producing a series of chorographies including reports on Madagascar (1609), Venice (1610), Carinthia (1610), and North-Western Europe (1613). On Megiser (1554/1555–1619), see Friederike Boockmann: Megiser, Hieronymus, in: *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 16 (1990), pp. 619–620.
- 3 Simone Porzio: *De conflagratione agri puteolani*, [Naples 1538]. While circulating as of 1538 in various manuscript copies, the text was immediately published also in an Italian translation by Ortenzio Rizzuti (*Trattato del fuoco apparso in li luochi de Puzolo del magnifico Simone Pertio*, Naples 1539), and had a later reprint in a slightly adapted version of the original (*De conflagratione agri Puteolani, Florentiae, apud Laurentium Torrentinum 1551*). On Porzio, see now Eva Del Soldato: *Simone Porzio, un aristotelico tra natura e grazia*, Rome 2010, esp. pp. 63–72; on the rare first edition (documented in a copy in the New York Public Library, sign. \*KB 1538), see Giovanni Bresciano: *L'edizione originale sconosciuta d'una epistola di Simone Porzio*, in: *La Bibliofilia* 33/11–12 (1931), pp. 460–463.

Bald kompt man hin an das Ort, da vorzeiten die heilsamen warmen Bäder *Tripergola* gestanden waren, heutigs tags aber is daselbst ein Berg von lauter Aschen und Bimsteinen, wol drey Meil hoch, genant *Mons novus*, der Neuberg. Mit dem es sich folgender Gestalt zugetragen, Anno 1537. und 1538. war die gantz Gegne umb *Puzzuolo* herumb stets mit grossen Erdbidem geplagt, daß also fast alle Heuser baufellig wurden. Aber am 27. und 28. Septemb. Anno 38. da erschüttete sich die Erden aneinander Tag und Nacht, unnd liess das Meer wol 200. Schritt ab von dem Gestad, wurden also unsäglich viel Fisch allda gefangen. Am 29. Tag welcher war S. Michaelis, erhob sich ein grosser Theil Lands zwischen dem Meer bey *Averno*, und dem Berg Gauro (daß ist, in dieser Tafel *Pozzuolo*, zwischen R. und N.) unnd bekam die Gestalt eines Bergs, umb 2. Uhr in der Nacht, that er sich auff mit grossem Krachen, und spey aus ein Hauffe schrecklichs Feuers, Bimsenstein, Stein, und abscheulicher Aschen, daß es alle Heuser zu *Puzzuolo*, und alles Kraut auff dem Feld bedecket, die Bäum zerbrach, auch den Weinwachß aller zu Asche macht, ja die Vögel, und viel vierfüssiger Thier umbbracht. Die armen Einwohner flohen mit grossem Heulen, sampt Weib und Kinder, nach Neapels zu. Also entstund in derselben einigen Nacht dieser neue Berg (Litera Q.) und wurden die Bäder *Tripergola* gantz und gar, und fast der gantz *Lacus Lucrinus*, darauff der Berg jetzt steht hergegen unter der Aschen begraben.<sup>4</sup>

There is however little surprise in the fact that in reporting on the Monte Nuovo episode a generally well-informed German scholar like Megiser felt the need to incorporate what he considered to be a first hand account, making it his own and refraining from presenting it as an erudite source. Others had done so before him, and such acts of plagiarism were so widespread that only very recently they had become an object of contention, significantly with regard to the exact same Monte Nuovo episode, in a polemic between two Neapolitan erudites, Scipione Mazzella and Tommaso Costo.<sup>5</sup> The Monte Nuovo episode indeed represents something of a watershed in the development this essay wants to foreground, since it is in the rendering of this 1538 eruption that we can find the first clear

4 MEGISER 1605, pp. 65–66. The version of Porzio, as reproduced in Brice Gruet: *Eruption avec témoins. La naissance du Monte Nuovo, Italie, 1538*, Clermont-Ferrand 2013, here p. 26: “At vero V et IV kal. octobr. perpetuis diebus noctibusque terra commota est: mare passibus fere CC recessit. Qui quidem loco et ingentem piscium multitudinem accolae capere, et aquae dulces salientes uisae sunt. III tandem kal. magnus terrae tractus, qui inter radices montis, quem Barbarum incolae appellant, et mare iuxta Auernum, iacet, sese erigere uidebatur, et montis subito nascentis figuram imitari. Eo ipso die hora noctis II iste terrae cumulus, aperto ueluti ore, magno cum fremitu, magnos ignes euomit: pumicesque et lapides, cinerisque foedi tantam copiam, ut quae adhuc extabant Puteolorum aedificia operverit, herbas omnes texerit, arbores fregerit, pendentemque uindimiam ad sextum usque lapidem in cineres uerterit, aues quoque, et nonnullas quadrupes bestias interemerit: fugientibus per tenebras Puteolanis cum natis, et uxoribus, et magno gemitu, eiulatuque Neapolim sese recipientibus.”

5 On this polemic, see Harald Hendrix: *Plagio e commercio nelle guide tardo-cinquecentesche dedicate a Napoli e Pozzuoli*, in: *Incontri* 29/1 (2014), pp. 41–53.

affirmation of a representational attitude that privileges observation and enquiry over authority.

From Megiser's report grounded on the testimony of Porzio we have already learned the dynamics of the event itself: after a two-year period of frequent but minor earthquakes, in the last days of September 1538 the seafloor near Pozzuoli receded some 200 feet leaving a large quantity of dead fish on the shore (Friday, September 27), and culminating in the upheaval of a large amount of earth forming a new hill where before had been the hamlet of Tripergola (Saturday, September 28). In that very night, this Monte Nuovo, as it was immediately called, bursted out in a violent eruption of ashes and burning stone covering a wide area, killing most of the plants and animals and obliging the populace to look for refuge in Naples (Sunday, September 30). The violence of the natural phenomenon caused great curiosity and concern amongst Neapolitans, notably the circles around vice-roy Pedro da Toledo who together with his court visited the devastated area already on Monday, October 1, promising to start a policy of investments in aid of the area's recovery. The day after, on Tuesday, October 2, a solemn procession with the relics of San Gennaro's head followed.<sup>6</sup> And within that same week, various reports on the catastrophe were written, as the frequent references to precise moments in time ('today,' 'yesterday,' etc.) in these texts testify.<sup>7</sup>

Produced clearly at the instance of leading personalities eager to learn in detail what exactly was happening,<sup>8</sup> some of these reports started to circulate first in manuscript and

- 6 As reported in Francesco Marchesino: *Copia di una lettera di Napoli che contiene li stupendi, et gran prodigi apparsi à Pozzolo* [1538], published only in Antonio Parascandola: *Il Monte Nuovo ed il lago Lucrino*, Naples 1946: "Ita che tutto Napoli se mosse à andare à vedere, et il Marte ando la Processione co la testa de San Gennaro fino alla Capella la quale è appresso a Pozzuolo, dove propriamente fu tagliata la testa à San Gennaro et il Lune di primieramente ando la Eccellentia de Vitio Re, con tutta la sua Corte, andorno anchor gli Filosofi, et dicono questo caso trovarsi posto in Aristotile." Text now in GRUET 2013, here p. 166.
- 7 Two of the letters reporting on the event are dated Saturday, October 5, 1538: the letter by Francesco MARCHESINO (1946) and the anonymous report by a 'studente,' *I Gran Segni et terremoti tratti appresso alla Citta di Napoli a un luogo chiamato Puzolo la uigilia di san Michelle, con piovere di solfore, & folgorar de troni, & aperture di mo(n)tagne, & grandissime fiam(m)e di fuoco, Et seccatosi piu di tre miglia il mare, & altre cose horribile per sette, o otto giorni continui apparse, & anchora seguitano*, printed without editorial indications (copies in the British Library London, the Bibliothèque Nationale Paris, and the Biblioteca Estense in Modena). Also Simone Porzio's more extensive discussion (see n. 3) was written within a few days of the catastrophe, since he mentions the ongoing activity of the eruption: "Durat et hoc incendium ad hanc usque diem", version in GRUET 2013, p. 28. Francesco Del Nero's report, while following Porzio's version with which he is familiar, equally mentions a visit to the location while the earthquakes are still continuing: Francesco Del Nero: *Lettera di Francesco Del Nero a Niccolò Del Benino sul terremoto di Pozzuolo, dal quale ebbe origine la Montagna Nuova, nel 1538*, in: *Archivio storico italiano* 9 (1846), pp. 93–96.
- 8 The Florentine ambassador Del Nero addresses his report to Niccolò Del Benino, while Marchesino reports to an unidentified correspondent "S. V." Porzio dedicates his report to the viceroy Pedro da Toledo, who probably commissioned the writing. The same goes for Piero Giacomo da Toledo: *Ragionamento del terremoto del Monte Nuovo, dell'aprimiento di terra in Pozzuolo nell'anno 1538*

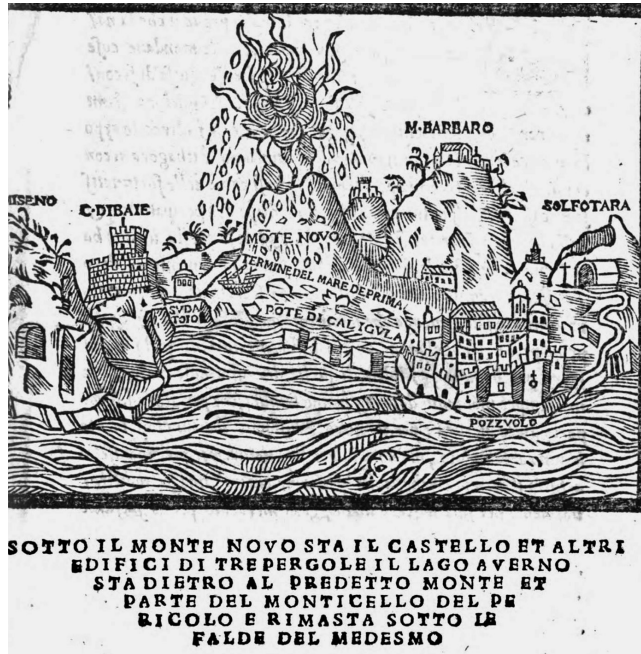


2 Francesco Marchesino: *Copia di una lettera di Napoli che contiene li stupendi, et gran prodigi appar si sopra a Pozzolo*, Naples 1538, frontispiece

then in print. And this was an occasion for the publishers to strengthen the immediacy effect even more, by adding graphic representations of the catastrophe. Thus the *Copia di una lettera di Napoli che contiene li stupendi, et gran prodigi appar si sopra a Pozzolo* (fig. 2) written by Francesco Marchesino within only a few days of the catastrophe features prominently

e della significazione di essi, Naples 1539. Marco Antonio delli Falconi: *Dell'incendio di Pozzuolo* [s.i.t.] writes at the instance of the marchesa di Padula, Maria di Cardona.

on its coverpage a hugely dramatic rendering of the event,<sup>9</sup> whereas the leading local publisher Sultzbach made use of a woodcut (fig. 3) with a more panoramic view of the event in the three texts he issued closely following the eruption: Porzio's *De conflagratione ager puteolanis*, published as we have seen already in 1538,<sup>10</sup> Marco Antonio delli Falconi's *Dell'incendio di Pozzuolo* and Piero Giacomo da Toledo's *Ragionamento del terremoto del Monte Nuovo, dell'aprimiento di terra in Pozzuolo nell'anno 1538 e della significazione di essi*, both published probably in the first weeks of 1539, so still within months of the catastrophe.<sup>11</sup>

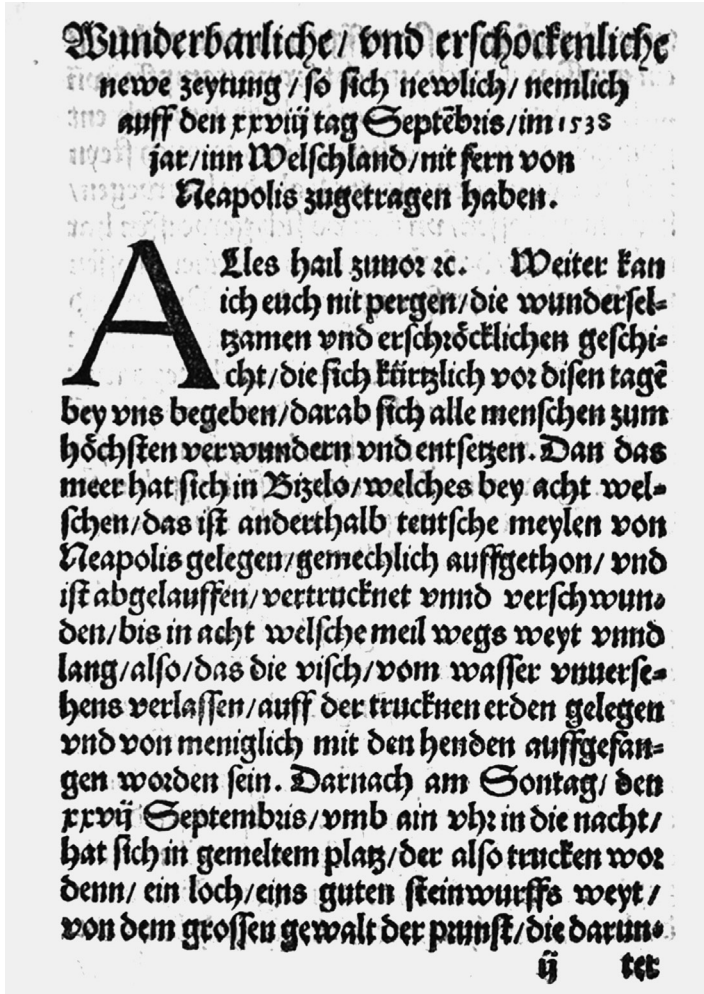


3 Marco Antonio delli Falconi: *Dello incendio di Pozzuolo*, Naples 1538

<sup>9</sup> See n. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, Sultzbach did not re-use this representation when publishing in 1539 the Italian translation of Porzio's *De conflagratione ager puteolanis*. In comparison to most of the earliest reports, Porzio's discussion of the events indeed had a quite different objective. Whereas Marchesino, Falconi, da Toledo, Del Nero and the German chronicler wanted to give an eyewitness report on what they considered to be an amazing event difficult to understand, Porzio goes beyond this and adds a learned digression in which he demonstrates that the eruption, as unusual and dramatic it may seem, responds to the laws of nature as explained by ancient philosophers, notably Aristotle. See DEL SOLDATO 2010, esp. pp. 63–72.

<sup>11</sup> See n. 8. On this dating and the role of the publisher Sultzbach, see Livio Petrucci: "...Inn Welschland, nicht fern von Neapolis," in: Marco Santagata and Alfredo Stussi (eds.): *Studi per Umberto Carpi. Un saluto da allievi e colleghi pisani*, Pisa 2000, pp. 569–606.



4 *Wunderbarliche, und erschöckenliche newe zeytung*, [Nuremberg] [1538], c. 1

What distinguishes both images is a schematic, almost symbolic rendering of the dramatic event in a geographical context which is at most elementary. As such it is a characteristic product of early cartography, which used such schematic templates to represent geographical realities, for example in the image of the city of Naples presented in the 1493 *Liber chronicarum* published by Hartman Schedel (pl. 3).<sup>12</sup> In the woodcuts on the Monte Nuovo episode we see the violent eruption at its peak, its victims, and a very limited number

12 Hartmann Schedel: *Liber chronicarum*, Nuremberg 1493, f. XLII. This image was used also to represent cities like Damascus, Ferrara, Mantua and Verona; see Giulio Pane and Vladimiro Valerio





5 'Horrendas fauces Averni [...] sic vidi e posui', from: Francisco da Holanda: *El Libro de las Antigualhas*, ms. Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, sig. 28-1-20, f. 53r

of geographical coordinates that allow us to understand the location of the episode. Clearly, the representational drive is secondary to the urge to give a report that focuses on the essentials of the event, probably to satisfy the unusually large curiosity it has caused in the local community but also far beyond. This in fact may be gathered from a contemporary German report on the event, a 'Flugblatt' entitled *Wunderbarliche und erschrockenliche neue Zeytung so sich newlich auff den 18 tag Septembris im 1538 jar in Welschland nit fern von Neapolis zugetragen haben* (fig. 4), an undated sheet which however was produced clearly in the wake of the event, and even was reprinted four times in order to satisfy the market of curious readers beyond the Alps.<sup>13</sup>

Alongside these images, which one perhaps might define as 'protojournalistic' or even 'sensationalist' given the fact that they targeted the audience's immediate curiosity, we have two other representations that denote a different perspective. One is by an accomplished artist, the Portuguese court painter Francisco de Holanda, who at the time of the events in Pozzuoli traveled through Italy at the command of his lord, king Joa III of Portugal, with the assignment to produce drawings of antiquities, the ones we can now admire in

(eds.): *La città di Napoli tra vedutismo e cartografia. Piante e vedute dal XV al XIX secolo*, exh. (Museo di Villa Pignatelli, Naples), Naples 1987, pp. 29–33.

13 *Wunderbarliche und erschrockenliche neue Zeytung so sich newlich auff den 18 tag Septembris im 1538 jar in Welschland nit fern von Neapolis zugetragen haben*, [Nuremberg 1538], c. 1. The report is anonymous and undated, but was re-issued at least 3 times. It takes its information from Porzio's report, as is detailed in PETRUCCI 2000.

his *Álbum dos Desenhos das Antigualhas* kept in the Royal Library of the Escorial. In 1540 Holanda visited Naples and its district, and made a most attractive watercolour drawing of the recently erupted Monte Nuovo, including a selfportrait of the artist at work, labeling it in his collection as “Horrendas fauces Averni [...] sic vidi e posui” (fig. 5).<sup>14</sup> This scene is obviously quite different from the ones produced in the booklets reporting on the catastrophe: this is a serene scene of observation, where the artist documents the newly emerged natural scene, stressing the fact that he himself observed and reported the situation: “vidi e posui.” The Monte Nuovo is most prominent in the work, rendered as it is in an attractively detailed fashion, but still leaving some room for the surrounding landscape which enables the unlooker to establish its geographical position. Holanda’s strategy though is clearly oriented to a non-local audience, as was of course his patron the king of Portugal, since it not only includes nearby locations as Lake Averno and Cuma, but stretches out to Terracina and Gaeta, surely to enable its less informed destinaries to better localise the spot within the general geographical context of Central Italy they were familiar with.

But why do we find this scene in a collection of *Desenhos das Antigualhas*, as a result of an enterprise clearly targeted at documenting antique heritage? Here we are touching upon the fusion of frames of reference mentioned at the start of this essay. Whereas in the drawing by Holanda these separate elements of heritage and nature are kept apart in the work itself, and can be gathered only from the framework in which they are presented, a clearcut fusion of these same elements appears in yet another representation of the Monte Nuovo eruption, a quite detailed panorama of the region which was published also in the immediate wake of the catastrophe (fig. 6), the *Vero disegno in sul proprio luogho ritratto del infelice paese di Posuolo* by a still unidentified artist known only by the published monograph “G. A.”<sup>15</sup> While we see here a documentary urge close to the one offered in Holanda’s drawing, as well as a contextualisation of the catastrophe the engraving wants to present—which in this case stretches out all over the bay of Naples, from Ischia to Capri—on the other hand we also see elements of the older, more symbolically oriented tradition, for example in the representation of the city of Naples that comes close to what we saw in the template-like image presented by Schedel. But the most distinguishing features of this image are the various kinds of geographical tags used by the engraver. The

14 Francisco de Holanda: *Álbum dos Desenhos das Antigualhas*, ms. Real Biblioteca del monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, sig. 28-I-20, f. 53r.; modern facsimile edition in: Francisco de Holanda: *Álbum dos desenhos das antigualhas*, ed. José da Felicidade Alves, Lisbon 1989, p. 59. On this album, see the PhD thesis by Rogéria Olimpio dos Santos: *O Álbum das Antigualhas de Francisco de Holanda*, Juiz de Fora 2015, esp. pp. 208–209.

15 On this map, see PANE/VALERIO 1987, pp. 34–36; Vladimiro Valerio and Ermanno Bellucci: *Piante e vedute di Napoli dal 1486 al 1599. L’origine dell’iconografia urbana europea*, Naples 1998, pp. 23–24, and Cesare De Seta and Alfredo Buccaro (eds.): *Iconografia delle città in Campania. Napoli e i centri della provincia*, Naples 2006, pp. 116–117. The catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Collection d’Anville, sign. 05584) mentions a G. A. de Vico as its author, and Petri de Nobilibus as its publisher.



6 Maestro del Trabochetto (monogramist G.A.): *Vero disegno in sul proprio luogo ritratto del infelice paese di Posuolo*, c. 1540, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France

sheet indicates North, West, South and East, and gives a fair amount of place names, alongside the main roads. Of course it shows the Monte Nuovo, again in full and most violent eruption: the “Monte fatto di novo in mare,” showing some of the catastrophe’s victims. And on the other side of Naples, it shows mount Vesuvius, in a manner perhaps more schematic than naturalistic.

What however distinguishes this sheet most is the presence of geographical coordinates not based on locations, roads, or features of the landscape, but defined by their profoundly cultural nature. The map maker includes an altogether not very large but significant series of buildings and monuments with strong cultural connotations, from the highly innovative Poggioreale villa only recently erected by king Alfonso to the tomb of Virgil (“sc.d Vergilio”) and the suburban villa of Sannazaro (“V. di Sanasaro”). As important *lieux de mémoire*, these elements of cultural and particularly literary heritage denote a strong connection to the early humanist view of Naples and its urban identity, as will be elaborated shortly. But the fact that in this “Vero disegno” they occur alongside elements we have seen in the other representations of the Monte Nuovo and that clearly have a orientation towards reporting situations based on evidence, suggests that this very image testifies to a shift in orientation, indeed the very changing balance between nature and heritage foregrounded in this essay’s title.

This view of the Pozzuoli area combines two attitudes towards describing cities and landscapes: an older one which connects such geographical realities to cultural notions suggested by the reading of authoritative texts, producing a foremost symbolic or metaphoric interpretation of the world described, and, on the other hand, a younger attitude that promotes observation, collecting data, and reporting on the results of such enquiries. These are the deductive and inductive approaches mentioned earlier on. And it is significant to note that the deductive orientation seems much more linked to the past than to the contemporary, as well as to art and not to nature. The inductive mentality on the other hand foregrounds recent events like the Monte Nuovo catastrophe and is characterised by a fascination for nature rather than for art. This image of the Monte Nuovo eruption, then, precisely because it combines the two perspectives, signals the arrival of a shifting mentality, which thus may be dated to the period of the eruption, to the years around 1540. To substantiate this claim I would like now to dwell shortly on two aspects that inform the shift this essay wants to foreground. First, the rise of a vision on Naples and its identity that was profoundly inspired by an orientation on the city's cultural and particularly literary heritage, something that we can observe as of the later fifteenth century and that dominated the first decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>16</sup> And secondly, the evolution of this vision in later chorographical descriptions of Naples and its district as it was informed by the reports on the Monte Nuovo eruption produced as of 1538.

If we have a look at what may be considered one of the first chorographic descriptions of Naples, Ioan Berardino Fuscano's *Le stanze del Fuscano sopra la bellezza di Napoli* published in 1531, it is easy to understand how profoundly literary was the vision of Naples projected by the generation of intellectuals that came after humanists like Sannazaro and Pontano. While offering a conventional *laus urbis*, Fuscano goes beyond the traditional templates at hand and constructs his eulogy of Naples and its beauties as a one-day itinerary of the two protagonists, thus framing his elaborate poem as a chorography of Naples, in fact arguably the first one we have. Philologo and Alpitio, the two friends whose names denote the allegorical nature of their enterprise from its very start, cross the city from East to West, without however giving any details on the specific locations visited, heading for what turns out to be the ultimate goal of their journey—the Posillipo hill, which is considered “il tempio de la sacra Mergellina.”<sup>17</sup>

16 For a more detailed discussion of this early chorographical tradition, see Harald Hendrix: *City Branding and the Antique. Naples in Early Modern City Guides*, in: Jessica Hughes and Claudio Buongiovanni (eds.): *Remembering Partenope. The Reception of Classical Naples from Antiquity to the Present*, Oxford 2015, pp. 217–241.

17 Ioan Berardino Fuscano: *Stanze sopra le bellezze di Napoli*, Rome 1531; modern edition Ioan Berardino Fuscano: *Stanze sopra la bellezza di Napoli*, ed. Cristiana Anna Adesso, Naples 2007, pp. 44–55 (Book I, 100–101): “[...] ti astringo a venir meco a quell'aprica / piaggia vicin, che Pausilippo è detta, / sol per diporto de le ninfe eletta. // Iv'è quella minuta et ricc'arena / ch'in vago giro il mar Tireno lava, / ivi sovente s'ode la sirena / in qualche scoglio, o in qualche grotta cava, / ivi sta mia foresta tutta piena / d'arbor, ch'Apollo et Citerea ne ornava / il tempio de la sacra Mergellina, / ch'or gode al tremolar de la marina.”

This location is by no means accidental, since it is here where the sepulchral monument to Virgil is situated, as well as the villa and sepulchral chapel Sannazaro built close by, out of a well meditated strategy to link his own identity as a poet and intellectual to the fame of his admired Roman predecessor. In Book II then, the friends participate in a festive ritual on this hill, which is promoted by a group of nymphs and attended by a large number of contemporary Neapolitan poets, all of whom were close to the Accademia Pontaniana. This solemn feast intends to celebrate poetry in a location that epitomises artistic creation, Virgil's grave close to the Piedigrotta tunnel, the only spot that the poem describes to some extent of precision, albeit still in a highly allegorical vocabulary appropriate for evoking the metaphysical processes of inspiration and creation that are performed there.<sup>18</sup>

In defining what distinguished Naples as a city, Fuscano focuses on its great men of letters, following not only a widespread convention of *uomini illustri* historiography but also Pontano's and Sannazaro's lessons in connecting modern poets to their antique models. A significant feature of this strategy to use antique literary heritage as a tool to project one's own contemporary identity had been indeed the labeling within the urban landscape of monuments and buildings as *lieux de mémoire*. This did not only concern the alleged grave of Virgil near Piedigrotta, or the villa of Cicero near Pozzuoli,<sup>19</sup> but also the various dwellings Neapolitan humanists constructed for themselves, notably the suburban villa's erected by Pontano and Sannazaro, and the town house of Pontano on the Via Nilo and his nearby Cappella:<sup>20</sup> all carefully chosen locations that foreground links to mythological associations—the nymphs Antiniana and Mergellina—as well as the material connection to the memory of antique predecessors like Cicero and Virgil, as the epitaph on Sannazaro's grave famously summarises: “Da sacro cineris flores: hic ille Maroni Sincerus Musa proximus ut tumulo.”

From this we may gather that in the first decades of the sixteenth century the dominant attitude in those observing and describing Naples and its distinct identity was

18 Ibid., p. 72 (Book II, 76–77): “Eran le ninfe giunte a un picciol piano, / ch’ a due a due venian con lenti passi, / dov’era un spatio, più ch’uom trae con mano, / d’una valletta fra duo poggi bassi. / Ivi un vestigio, come d’alcun fano / che mostr’antiquità, solingo stassi, / d’arbori cinto et sempre esposto al sole, / pien tutto di ligustri et di viole. // In mezzo v’era un’alta pino annosa, / la qual sorgea per dentr’un sasso rotto, / entrar là dentro alcun già mai non osa, / si non è spirto assai ben colto et dotto.”

19 Cf. Joseph Burney Trapp: The Grave of Vergil, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984), pp. 1–31; Jean d’Amato: Cicero’s Villas in the Phlegraean Fields. The Development of Historical and Cultural Myth, in: *Viator* 24 (1993), pp. 385–419.

20 Cf. Erasmo Percopo: Ville ed abitazioni di poeti in Napoli, I. La villa del Pontano ad Antignano, in: *Napoli nobilissima* n. s. 2 (1921), pp. 1–7; Riccardo Filangieri di Candida: Il Tempietto di Giovanni Pontano in Napoli, in: *Atti dell’Accademia Pontaniana* 56 (1926), pp. 103–139; Francesco Divenuto: *Deos nemorum invocat in extruenda domo*. Iacopo Sannazaro e la sua casa a Mergellina, in: Pasquale Sabbatino (ed.): *Iacopo Sannazaro. La cultura napoletana nell’Europa del Rinascimento*, Florence 2009, pp. 237–260.

strongly embedded in a literary tradition rooted in respect for authoritative texts from the city's ancient past. This is what we still can see in the first more systematic description of the city, dating from 1548, the *Descrittione dei luoghi antiqui di Napoli* by Benedetto Di Falco. This work, which was reprinted many times until well into the seventeenth century, had a major impact on early modern perceptions of Naples and its district.<sup>21</sup> In introducing the city, Di Falco still adheres to the conventions of erudite literary branding, starting his itinerary from Posillipo and Mergellina while elaborately recording these locations' literary associations and linking them almost automatically to the accomplishments of contemporary Neapolitan poets. Pre-eminent here is the figure of Sannazaro, whose project to memorialise his image by connecting it to Virgil's reputation and alleged sepulchral presence is celebrated at length, since—as Di Falco complacently notes—“[s]ogliono i luoghi nominarsi per li sepolcri d'huomini eccellenti e rari.”<sup>22</sup>

However, Di Falco then goes on to describe in some detail not just the city's antique heritage, but its original urbanistic layout along the three main *decumani*. He contrasts this with later developments that could be observed in the contemporary city, highlighting those situations where this had produced a hybrid mix of antique and modern, as for instance the antique theatre still visible in the house of the duke of Termoli, which now is the Teatro dell'Anticaglia.<sup>23</sup> While exploring this fusion of antique and modern elements in the urban fabric, Di Falco shows a particular interest in the documentation of epigraphic material, both ancient and modern. He puts considerable energy into providing Italian translations for the Latin and sometimes Greek texts, even when this is not an easy task, as is the case with the obscure epitaphs he finds on Pontano's former house, the Palazzo dell'Arco.<sup>24</sup> His book is therefore clearly positioned—not towards an erudite readership of humanists like his colleagues in the (by now fading) Accademia Pontaniana but towards a general audience that was not particularly knowledgeable about the significance of such antique traces.

21 Benedetto Di Falco: *Descrittione dei luoghi antiqui di Napoli*, Naples [1548]; modern edition Benedetto Di Falco: *Descrittione dei luoghi antiqui di Napoli*, ed. Marcella Grippo, Gennaro Toscano, and Tobia R. Toscano, Naples 1992.

22 Benedetto Di Falco: *Descrittione dei luoghi antiqui di Napoli e del suo amenissimo distretto*, Naples 1589, pp. 25–26: “Fe ancora l'otiosa e dotta Napoli, Poeta nobile e chiaro Giovanni Pontano, il Sannazaro, il Gravina, Statio che è nel numero de gli antichi, & altri. Sogliono i luoghi nominarsi per li sepolcri d'huomini eccellenti e rari, come Hierusalem per il santo sepolcro di Cristo, e 'l monte Cascio nella Soria per il tumulo di Pompeo, Sigeo per la tomba d'Achille, e la nostra gloriosa Napoli per la sepoltura di Virgilio.”

23 *Ibid.*, p. 75: “Nel seggio della Montagna era il teatro dove si recitavano tutti componimenti greci e latini delli studiosi ingegni che in quella etade fiorivano in Napoli, le cui vestigie antiche e l'alte mura del che paiono hoggidì nel palazzo del Duca di Termole. In questo theatro Nerone imperatore ritornando da Grecia musicalmente cantò come scrive Suetonio nella sua vita, né dispregzò l'ufficio del recitare offertogli dai napoletani, considerando esso Nerone l'eccellenza degli honorati studi che fiorivano in Napoli di tutte l'arti liberali.”

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77.

This orientation helps us to better grasp the ambitions underlying Di Falco's project, as do some of the sections of this altogether still rather incoherent city description. Di Falco alternates chapters on the classical roots of Naples and Pozzuoli with lengthy paragraphs on the city's modern churches and its district's celebrated thermal infrastructure; he also inserts digressions on the etymology of city names, on the lining of streets with trees and plants, as well as on contemporary and antique aristocratic conventions in table setting. And not forgetting the suggestions offered by his forerunners in the circles of Pontano and Sannazaro, Di Falco unsurprisingly closes his *Descrittione* with a paragraph on the city's modern Academies and on the by now topical monuments that testify to their glory: the graves of Virgil, Sannazaro and his friend Parrasio, and the chapel and house of Pontano.<sup>25</sup>

What emerges from this discussion on early Neapolitan chorography is that it privileges art over nature, antique over modern. In the urban fabric, a man like Di Falco is looking for traces of heritage that to him have meaning since they are imbued with authority mainly derived from antique texts, exactly as intellectuals like Pontano, Sannazaro and Fuscano had done before him. But Di Falco also registers all kinds of evidence he comes across, and specifically if this is textual material like the epigraphs he all but systematically notes and reports. This is much closer to the alternative disposition discussed previously which privileges investigation, registration and reporting of all kinds of evidence.

This different mentality, which thus in 1548 finds its way into a book like Di Falco's *Descrittione* that is programmatically oriented towards the *luoghi antiqui*, a decade earlier already had surfaced in the texts reporting on the eruption of the Monte Nuovo that have been discussed earlier on. Particularly the reports by Marchesino, Falconi and Toledo, that as we have seen all were issued in the immediate wake of the catastrophic event at the end of 1538 and the first weeks of 1539, are predominantly characterised by fact-finding, be it on the basis of personal observations of the event, or from hear-say but from trustworthy people that themselves had been eyewitnesses of the eruption. This indeed has motivated most of the authors to put in writing the evidence they had access to, since others asked them to produce such reports: Falconi writes his report at the instance of Maria di Cardona, and the Florentine ambassador in Naples Francesco Del Nero reports to one of his hometown friends, Niccolò Del Benino.

The ambassador not only gives a well-informed, detailed and neutral report on the events, but also signals that “tutto il mondo eravi a vedere, e stupefacevano.” This great public concern also generated an interest that went beyond the immediate, and is at the basis of the erudite treatise published by Simone Porzio in the wake of the event itself, which not only offers a report of the event—however not based on first-hand observation—but dwells much more than the other authors on the natural causes underlying the catastrophe, and on its possible consequences in the longer run. To do so, Porzio relates the event to what authoritative scholars, particularly Aristotle, had written on natural

25 Ibid., pp. 132–134.

phenomena like this one. This clearly produces a rapprochement between the inductive disposition characterising most of the reports on the Monte Nuovo eruption and a more deductive approach that characterizes the scholarly culture dominating the vision on Naples in the previous generations.

While it was Porzio's endeavour to interpret the catastrophe as a natural phenomenon, within a frame of reference derived from Aristotle's physics, it was however not this scholarly perspective to have a lasting effect on the chorography of Naples and its district. It was on the contrary exactly the viewpoint he tried to scale down, based not on authority but on observation and on the reporting of spectacular phenomena, that would inform future descriptions of the city and its surrounding area.<sup>26</sup> Such a preference for the reporting of facts based on observations indeed found its way into chorography already in the immediate wake of the Monte Nuovo episode, in the seminal *Descrittione di tutta Italia* by Leandro Alberti, a text published only in 1551 but prepared over a very long time starting in 1528, when Alberti decided to use his frequent professional visits as inspector of the Domenican convents all over Italy to collect data for a guide of the peninsula.<sup>27</sup> On his trips, he also made a lengthy visit to Naples and its district, but he visited the Pozzuoli area before the 1538 catastrophe. Perhaps because he was that well-informed on this region, Alberti had a particular interest in how the eruption had changed the landscape he himself had observed, and this caused him to ask detailed reports on this matter to the contacts he had established in Naples. On the basis of their reports, Alberti was able to insert in his chorography a highly significant description of the catastrophe, that in the long run would turn out to become very influential.<sup>28</sup>

- 26 Characteristic indeed is the fact that the German scholar Megiser, quoted at the start of this essay, used Porzio's text in his *Delitiae Napolitanae* of 1605 only for the details of the catastrophe, and not for his explanation of the causes of this phenomenon.
- 27 Leandro Alberti: *Descrittione di tutta Italia*, Bologna 1550; modern facsimile edition based on the Venice 1568 edition: *Descrizione di tutta Italia* di F. Leandro Alberti Bolognese. Aggiuntavi la *Descrittione di tutte l'Isole*, 2 vols., Bergamo 2003 [1550/1568]. On Alberti's chorography, see Giancarlo Petrella: *L'officina del geografo. La "Descrittione di tutta Italia" di Leandro Alberti e gli studi geografico-antiquari tra Quattro e Cinquecento*, Milan 2004; and Massimo Donattini (ed.): *L'Italia dell'Inquisitore. Storia e geografia dell'Italia del Cinquecento nella "Descrittione" di Leandro Alberti*, Bologna 2007.
- 28 "Avanti che piu oltra passi agli altri Bagni vicini, voglio narrare il gran caso occorso al luogo della Contrada di Tripergola sopra descritta & alli luoghi conturni, nell'anno 1538 nel giorno di S. Michel di Settembre. Essendo prima sentiti per piu giorni alcuni terremotti con tanto parentevole tuono & rimbombo, si aprese la terra qui a Tripergola, che parve rovinale tutta la machina mondiale, essendo il Cielo sereno. Onde tutti i circostanti popoli stupefatti stando, & come fuori di se stessi, cominciorno ad uscire di questa apertura fiamme di fuoco conducendo feso cenere accompagnata da sassi affochati con gran fumo & caligine. Erano portate dette pietre con tanto impero al Cielo, ch'era cosa maravigliosa da vedere, & paventosa da considerare. Edalando altresì gran furia di vento da ogni lato, erano portate da ogni lato l'antidette cinere, & massimamente verso Puzzoli e Napoli, ove con tant'impero erano condotte da'l vento, che passando altresì Napoli arrivarono a S. Severino (da Napoli venti quattro miglia discosto) guastando, & rovinando ogni cosa, & massimamente gli alberi & animali. Aperta dunque la terra, & uscendo le fiamme di fuogo



Alberti's lively and well-informed report found its way, after the publication of the book in 1551 and its immediate success in Italy and far beyond, to many subsequent chorographies describing this area, both by Italians and foreigners. It was even copied in a work like Scipione Mazzella's 1591 *Sito, ed antichità della città di Pozzuolo e del suo amenissimo distretto*,<sup>29</sup> a book soon to become a leading guidework for those visiting the Pozzuoli area, a fact that explains why Mazzella's plagiarism soon produced opposition from those who knew well Alberti's text. Like Tommaso Costo who in 1595 attacked Mazzella's plagiarism in his *Ragionamenti di Tomaso Costo intorno alla Descrizione del Regno di Napoli e all'Antichità di Pozzuolo di Scipione Mazzella. Per li quali e con ragioni, e con autorità verissime si mostra, non pur esser molti errori, e mancamenti in quelle due opere, ma che le medesime son tutte cose copiate puntualmente da gli scritti altrui*.<sup>30</sup>

Over the years, however, Alberti's text suggested more a general template than specific descriptions to be copied. The memory of the dramatic events of 1538 gradually started to fade, and authors preferred to report not any more on the catastrophe as such, but on the new landscape it had produced. This is what we can see in the first systematic description of the Pozzuoli area, *Le antichità di Pozzuolo, et luoghi convicini nuovamente raccolte dall'illustriss. sig. Ferrante Loffredo, marchese di Treviso* published in 1570, an important book since it is one of the first, if not the very first, tourist guide we have. Being the son of Cecco Loffredo who in 1538 had personally witnessed the Monte Nuovo eruption, as is specified in the letter by Del Nero previously discussed,<sup>31</sup> Ferrante Loffredo must have been well-informed on this dramatic event. But his chapter on Tripergola only has a very

con pietre & cenere, talmente intorno intorno a detta apertura l'antidette ceneri composero colle pietre spongole le rive, che ne risultò un'altro & largo Monte rimanendovi nel mezzo un bucco, di larghezza (come si puote guidicare) di passa cinquanta, alle radici girando quattro miglia. Per tal apertura & compositione di Monte, sonvi rimasi sotto molti Bagni di Tripergola, con gran parte dell'Averno, de'l Luvrino, & et andio alquanto l'acque marine paiono esser retratte, per gran spatio. Cessata la gran furia delle fiamme di fuoco, quale uscivano, rimase quest'alto Monte nella sommità con detta bocca ritonda, sempre più in giù strengendosi, a simiglianza d'un artefocolo Theatro, tal che nel fondo d'esso, vi è solamente una piccola piazza, ove si vede chiara acqua, dalla quale si continovo essala fumo d'odor di Solfo. La onde sono perduti assai Bagni molto giovevoli alli mortali." ALBERTI 2003 [1550/1568], vol. 1, foll. 176v–177r.

29 Scipione Mazzella: *Descrittione del Regno di Napoli*, Naples 1586; id.: *Sito, ed antichità della città di Pozzuolo e del suo amenissimo distretto*, Naples 1591. On Mazzella's guidebooks, see Francesca Amirante: Scipione Mazzella, in: ead. (ed.): *Libri per vedere. Le guide storico-artistiche della città di Napoli: fonti e testimonianze del gusto, immagini di una città*, Naples 1995, pp. 38–41.

30 Tommaso Costo: *Ragionamenti di Tomaso Costo intorno alla Descrizione del Regno di Napoli e all'Antichità di Pozzuolo di Scipione Mazzella. Per li quali e con ragioni, e con autorità verissime si mostra, non pur esser molti errori, e mancamenti in quelle due opere, ma che le medesime son tutte cose copiate puntualmente da gli scritti altrui*, Naples 1595. On the author, see Giorgio Masi: *Da Collenuccio a Tommaso Costo. Vicende della storiografia napoletana tra Cinque e Seicento*, Naples 1999. On his accusations of plagiarism, see HENDRIX 2014.

31 "Bisognommi ieri tornare per mare a Pozzolo con messer Cecco de Loffredo, che è quello ha in mano la cosa dove ha interesse Messer Pavolo Antonio. Eravi tutto il mondo a vedere, e stupefacevano, e li era niente altro che la Montagna," in DEL NERO 1846, as reproduced in GRUET 2013, here p. 154.

limited reference to it, while concentrating more on the evocation of the situation prior to the eruption and the explanation of the etymology of the name Tripergola.<sup>32</sup> Yet this does not restrain Loffredo from adopting a frame of reference closely related to the one first proposed in the eyewitness reports on the catastrophe. In his dedicatory letter to his physician Paolo Moneco, who had advised him to take some rest at the baths in the Campi Flegrei, Loffredo, who was not a scholar but a leading captain in the neapolitan military, specifies that his detailed description of the Pozzuoli region is grounded on his personal observations *in situ*, on information gathered from local people and from well-informed friends, as well as on the references in classical authorities, used to supplement the documentation based on such direct or indirect observations: “così mi diedi a cercare, ed d’investigare quelle antichità, che ivi si veggono, la onde il di cavalcando per il paese, & particolarmente vedendo tutte le cose di consideratione, & di meraviglia, tanto naturali, come artificiali, che sono dal capo di Pausilipo, insino a Miseno, & quindi à Cuma, lungo il lido, & su per li colli & monti d’intorno; & poi la notte conferendole con li scritti de gli Autori antichi, che ne parlano, & similmente pigliandone quelli rincontri che migliori si poteano da i Paesani per fama, & per memoria, lasciata loro da i padri e avoli accozzando tutte queste cose insieme [...]”<sup>33</sup>

- 32 Ferrante Loffredo: *Le antichità di Pozzuolo, et luoghi convicini nuovamente raccolte dall’illustriss. sig. Ferrante Loffredo, marchese di Trevico, & del Consiglio della Guerra di Sua Maestà*, Naples 1573, foll. 10v–11r, chapter 15: “Vicino al Lago Averno era un monticello & sopra un castello, il quale debbe essere opera de Francesi da trecento anni in qua; fra questo monticello & Averno, & la casa della Sibilla, era quasi la maggior parte de i bagni di Pozzuolo, per causa di quali vi era un borgo di una strada lunge dall’acqua di Averno, infino appresso il mare, secondo a questo tempo stava. Perche la maggior parte dove hoggi è la montagna nova, in quelli tempi era mare. Et questo borgo, à tempo de’ bagni dovea essere molto habitato, & fornito di tutte le cose che bisognavano per il vitto de gli huomini. Vi erano molti spedali per li poveri che venivano a pigliar i bagni. Vi era ancora uno Truglio antico, non già della grandezza di quello di Baia, ma era di bella architettura, & molto ben fatto, i bagni, il castello, il Truglio co’l lago Lucrino stanno hoggi sepolti nel monte novo. Vicino questo Castello era un colle assai delizioso, detto Trispoto, del quale fa mentione Propertio, & hoggidi serba il nome, benche alquanto corrotto, per si dice volgarmente, Trispete, del qual colle gran parte ancora ne resta sepolto dal monte novo. Da questo Trispoto per aventura derivò il nome del detto Castello, qual si dice Tripergola.”
- 33 *Ibid.*, foll. 2r–v: “Ferrante de Loffredo, marchese di Trevico, a Paolo Moneco. Nell’inverno passato, che à consiglio vostro per la salute mia dimorai in Pozzuolo, non potendo soffrir quell’otio, ne havendo che altro trattare, ritiratomi da negotij, deliberai di trovare trattenimento, nel quale potesse occupare il corpo, & la mente, così mi diedi a cercare, ed d’investigare quelle antichità, che ivi si veggono, la onde il di cavalcando per il paese, & particolarmente vedendo tutte le cose di consideratione, & di meraviglia, tanto naturali, come artificiali, che sono dal capo di Pausilipo, insino a Miseno, & quindi à Cuma, lungo il lido, & su per li colli & monti d’intorno; & poi la notte conferendole con li scritti de gli Autori antichi, che ne parlano, & similmente pigliandone quelli rincontri che migliori si poteano da i Paesani per fama, & per memoria, lasciata loro da i padri e avoli accozzando tutte queste cose insieme, se ben ritrovai molte conformità, di quel che vedea cavalcando con i libri, & con la fama, nondimeno ritrovai alcune difformità ancora, & differenze, & in parecchie cose mi fecero gran difficoltà il silentio de’ Scrittori, la fama perduta, le reliquie di fabriche del tutto disfatte, & finalmente il mancamento di tutti gli aiuti, che sogliono guidare

So here clearly emerges the fusion of perspectives this essay focuses on: alongside the elder orientation on bookish knowledge and authorities, observation and enquiry—be it direct or indirect—is firmly established as a legitimate frame of reference. What we witness in the texts produced as of the 1570s is indeed a hybridisation of both orientations, where a strong interest in identifying in the natural and urban landscape those elements that relate to what antique authors have written goes alongside an urge to document evidence, both antique and modern, both relating to nature and to art, develops into a disposition that would characterise many generations to come.

The text that perhaps best documents this fusion is the travelogue written by the Utrecht humanist Stephanus Pighius, the *Hercules Prodicus*, based on an elaborate tour of Italy that took place in 1575, but published only much later, in 1587.<sup>34</sup> Pighius follows an itinerary completely dominated by his interest in antiquity, but on his way collects and reports on all kind of evidence, inspired to do so by the Alberti *Descrittione* which is his main guidebook. So when in the Pozzuoli area, he refers to what had happened in that dramatic night in September 1538, describing the results both as a naturalist and as an antiquarian, in fact lamenting the destruction of so many important antique monuments: “Quantum igitur veterum monumentorum sub sepelierit, haud facilè dixeris.”<sup>35</sup> The *Hercules Prodicus* is of seminal importance not only because this travelogue of an antiquarian

la congettura in simili cose. Pure determinai di vincere quanto si bastava, con la diligenza tutte queste incommodità, & rivedere tante volte i luoghi, esaminare sì minutamente i paesani, & diligentemente rivolgere, & considerare i libri, che non rimanesse industria da fare. Et travagliai di modo, che mi pare di esserne pervenuto, se non mi'inganno, à tutta quella vera luce, che si potea in tante oscurità. Et come che desidero, che alcuni miei amici, à i quali piacciono simili studi, vedano questa mia fatica intorno alle antichità di Pozzuolo, & luoghi convicini, mi ha parso mandarla à voi prima, acciò parendovi degna che si legga, esca fuori con vostra licenza, fra detti amici solamente. Et quando altrimente vi paresse, non solo si atterri, ma si bruci, che io son contento di perder quanto fatica ho preso in cio, più tosto, che dare materia ad altri di riprendermi con ragione.”

34 Stephanus Pighius: *Hercules prodicius, sive principis iuventutis vita et peregrinatio, Antuerpiae, ex officina Christophori Plantini 1587*. The book offers a detailed account of the Italian tour undertaken from 1573 till 1575 by the young German prince Charles Frederic of Cleve and his tutor, the Dutch humanist Stephanus Pighius (1520–1604). The part on Naples and its district is on pp. 452–518. On this trip, see Marc Laureys: *Theory and Practice of the Journey to Italy in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*. Stephanus Pighius' *Hercules Prodicus*, in: Dirk Sacré and Gilbert Tournoy (eds.): *Myrica. Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Memory of Jozef IJsewijn*, Leuven 2000, pp. 269–301.

35 PIGHIUS 1587, pp. 511–512: “Iam vero Lucrini & Averni spacia magna mons novus occupat, ex imis terrarum penentralibus excitus anno salutis nostra MDXXXVIII, in fine mensis septembris, cum fere biennio totus ille regionis tractus crebris terramotibus fuisset concussus. Tum autem III. kal. Octobris una nocte inter Gauri radice & mare iuxta dictos lacus mons ille semet erexit in altitudinem mille passus fere cc. submovit. Tripergolanum vicum per amplum cum celeberrimis balneis penitus absorbuit, & lacus duos Lucrinum Avernumque vicinos magna ex parte saxis, cineribus & terra complevit. Queterna passuum milia nunc radicum suarum ambitu complectitur. Quantum igitur veterum monumentorum sub se sepelierit, haud facile dixeris. Crater in eius cacumine circularis, per quem flammæ eructavit, late per diametrum patet passibus circiter quinquaginta, clivoseque descendes in arctam adhuc temporis in fundo fumanets atque calidas aquas continere dicitur.”

contains some of the earliest and detailed descriptions of natural phenomena, as famously in Pighius's report on his ascent of Mount Vesuvius. Its legacy is even more impressive, since a decade after its publication the text was re-assembled in a new product targeting the ever growing number of people traveling to Italy, the first comprehensive tourist guide of the peninsula produced in 1600 by the Antwerp based Frans Schott, the *Itinerarii Italiae rerumq. Romanarum libri tres*, which was to become the standard guide for foreign visitors all through the seventeenth and large part of the eighteenth century.<sup>36</sup> And thus also in this hugely successful guidebook we find the same disposition combining deductive and inductive attitudes developed by men like Pighius following up on Alberti and the authors of the reports on the eruption of the Monte Nuovo.<sup>37</sup>

The texts and images presented in this essay attest to a gradual but fundamental shift in attitudes as to the elements of art and nature, ancient and modern, bookish knowledge and evidence based enquiry. Whereas the early sixteenth-century authors cherished a predominantly deductive disposition rooted in their admiration for antique culture and authoritative antique texts in particular, as of the 1540s we see the development of a more inquisitive disposition interested in phenomena that were new and not accountable for by only trusting on what had been transmitted of ancient knowledge. The Monte Nuovo episode is a key moment in this evolution, since it was the first moment where such new kind of curiosity was put into writing. The new orientation however did not erase the older one, but gradually grew into a complex and hybrid fusion of mentalities that turned out to become highly influential when it found its way into chorographical literature and the quickly expanding phenomenon of the Grand Tour to Italy.

36 Franciscus Schottus: *Itinerarii Italiae rerumq. Romanarum libri tres*, Antuerpiae, ex officina Plantiniana, apud Ioannem Moretum 1600. On its reception, see Esmond Samuel de Beer: François Schott's 'Itinerario d'Italia,' in: *The Library. Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 23/2–3 (1942), pp. 57–83.

37 This version is from the Italian translation published in Andrea Scoto: *Itinerario, ovvero nova descrizione de' viaggi principali d'Italia*, Vicenza 1622, pp. 53–54: "Caso meraviglioso. A nostri tempi, cioè l'anno 1538 sendo stata agitata quella vicinanza quasi duoi anni continui dal terremoto, al fine la notte del 28 settembre tra le radici del monte Gauro, & il mare vicino ai detti laghi, si levò un novo monte alto un miglio per dritto; il quale hora al basso circa da quattro miglia, & l'acqua del mare per 200. passi di spacio ritirandosi, restò sorbita dalla voragine della terra una contrata intiera e grande, nominata il Tripergolano, con alcuni suoi bagni ch'erano celebratissimi, e restarono pieni in gran parte di sassi, terra, e cenere, i vicini laghi Averno e Lucrino. Quante altre vecchie memorie habbi questo novo monte convertite sotto non si può sapere. Ha nella cima un buco largo incirca cinquanta passi, per il quale nel principio gettò fuoco, & si dice che al presente nel fondo di detto forame si trovano acque calde."