

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Pietro Antoniani  
(Milan, c. 1740/50 - 1805)

*A View of Vesuvius Erupting  
from the Torre del Greco*

oil on canvas

66 x 132.5 cm.; 26 x 52 1/8 in.

---

Provenance

Private collection, France.

---

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



---

LONDON

NEW YORK

MADRID

# COLNAGHI

Est. 1760

Pietro Antoniani painted a number of views of Vesuvius erupting, all of which portray the grand sense of spectacular drama that this event must have provided to an onlooker. A painting dated 1776 of the 1767 eruption, shown from the other side of the volcano, is the same size as the present painting.<sup>1</sup> It shows a pathway leading up to the viewing platform, while our painting depicts a more daring version of events: one figure can even be seen climbing up to the viewing point in the bottom right corner of the composition. We are grateful to Emilie Beck-Saiello for her assistance in confirming the attribution to Antoniani.

Antoniani was born in Milan in around 1740 and appears to have travelled to Naples early in his career. He specialised in painting large, topographical landscape views of Naples and its surrounding countryside. These pictures were very popular with the touring nobles and aristocrats of the time on their 'Grand Tour', and many returned to England with their new English owners.

It is assumed that Antoniani may actually have travelled to England and met many grandees. Sir William Hamilton commissioned two views from him; *Naples from Mergellina* (1771) and the *Eruption of Vesuvius* (1776), now in private British collections. Charles Towney and Sir Henry Brudenell also commissioned works from him. Such illustrious patrons with a keen eye for talent were good endorsements of Antoniani's qualities.

Antoniani – although a generation later than Gabrielli Ricciardelli (fl. 1745-1777), Antonio Joli (c. 1700–1777) and Pietro Fabris (active 1756-1779) – together with them can be said to have dominated topographical painting of the Italian landscape during this period.

---

<sup>1</sup> Previously in the Collection of the Earl of Wharnccliffe and sold at Christie's, October 16th 1959, lot 119.