

1 **Review article: Brief history of volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area (Campania,**
2 **Southern Italy): A critical review**

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7
8 **Abstract**

9 The presence of three active volcanoes (Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei and Ischia Island) along the coast
10 of Naples did not contained the huge expansion of the urbanised zones around them. On the contrary,
11 since the Greco-Roman era, volcanoes have featured among the favourite sites for people colonising
12 the Campania region. The stable settlements around Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei caldera and Ischia were
13 progressively enlarged, attaining maximum growth rate between 1950 and 1980. Between 1982 and
14 1984, Neapolitans faced the last and most dramatic volcanic crises, which occurred at Campi Flegrei
15 (Pozzuoli), without an eruption. Since that time, volcanologists have focused their attention on the
16 problem of risks associated with eruptions in the Neapolitan area, but a systematic strategy to reduce
17 the very high volcanic risk of this zone is still lacking. A brief history of volcanic risk in the
18 Neapolitan district is narrated here in an effort to provide new food for thought for the scientific
19 community that works for the mitigation of volcanic risk in this area.

20
21 **Keywords:** Neapolitan volcanoes, volcanic risk, volcanic hazard, risk mitigation, human settlements.

22
23 **1. Introduction**

24 The region surrounding Naples is one of the most-risky volcanic areas in the world, due to the
25 presence of three active volcanoes, Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei caldera and the Island of Ischia, it is
26 inhabited by more than 1,500,000 people, directly exposed to the risk (Alberico et al., 2011; Carlino,
27 2019) (Fig. 1). These volcanoes are capable of generating a wide range of eruptions, from gentle lava
28 flow to those triggering catastrophic effects and were active in historical times (the last eruption
29 occurring in 1944 at Vesuvius, in 1538 at Campi Flegrei and in 1302 at Ischia). Larger eruptions at
30 Vesuvius have devastated entire territories around the volcano, up to a distance of 10–20 km from
31 the vent, as was observed in 79 AD (Pompei) and 1,800 BC (Avellino), respectively. At least two
32 large caldera-forming eruptions occurred at Campi Flegrei, the Campania Ignimbrite (CI), ~39 ka, and
33 the Neapolitan Yellow Tuff (NYT), ~15 ka, which involved the entire Campania Plain, such as the
34 case of the CI event. At Ischia, a large eruption occurred about 55 ka, while the subsequent activity

35 was mostly confined within the island (de Vita et al., 2010; De Vivo et al., 2006; Mastrolorenzo et
36 al., 2006; Piochi et al., 2005). In Figure 2, a sketch of the eruptive history of Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei
37 and Ischia is presented (Piochi et al., 2005).

38 On one hand, volcanoes and their activity produced fertile soils for farming, hot waters and lakes for
39 human recreation, raw materials and natural inlets along the coast for sea navigators (Carlino et al.,
40 2010a; Scarpati et al., 2016). These features make the Neapolitan area a favourable site for human
41 settlements and the development of a local economy. However, volcanic activity has greatly
42 devastated the area and left behind many victims (Scarpati et al., 2013). The city of Naples itself
43 stands on various volcanic centres and, in particular, on the extended deposits of the NYT eruption
44 (~15 ka); this eruption triggered the collapse of the present Campi Flegrei caldera (Scarpati et al.,
45 2013), the eastern rim of which is the site where an important residential area of the city (the *Posillipo*
46 *hill*) stands (Fig. 3). Analysing the most crucial historical moments that marked the relationship
47 between humans and Neapolitan volcanoes is fundamental to understanding why so many people are
48 nowadays residing in such a hazardous area. On the other hand, we need to also analyse the
49 development of the research in volcanology and its impact in mitigating the risk of this highly
50 inhabited area. In the long history of relations between humans and Neapolitan volcanoes, a few
51 notable milestone events must be mentioned: the Pompei 79 AD eruption, reconstructed by the letters
52 of Plinian the Younger; the eruption of Vesuvius of 1631 which, after almost 500 years of quiescence,
53 ushered a long period of continuous volcanic activity ending in 1944; the systematic exploration of
54 Pompei (buried by the 79 AD event) starting from 1748; the foundation of the “Osservatorio
55 Vesuviano” (Vesuvius Observatory) under the Bourbons domination in 1841; the eruption of
56 Vesuvius in 1944, which closed the activity of the volcano and the unrests crises at Campi Flegrei
57 caldera in 1970–72 and 1982–84 (Barberi et al., 1984; Cubellis et al., 2015; Perrotta & Scarpati, 2009;
58). Particularly, in this paper, the latter two crises at Campi Flegrei will be discussed, as they occurred
59 during a challenging time in the field of earth science and when volcano-monitoring networks were
60 being improved and policies for management and prevention of the risks in the Neapolitan area altered
61 (Carlino, 2019). Starting from that time, the problem of volcanic hazard and risk in the Neapolitan
62 area has been systematically treated by several authors, trying to quantify the equation of the risk:
63 $risk = hazard \times vulnerability \times exposed\ value$ (see Blong, 1996 and the references therein). A larger
64 part of the studies has been aimed at assessing the hazard and, to a lesser extent, the risk (see, for
65 instance, Mastrolorenzo et al., 2006; Petrosino et al., 2004; Scandone et al., 1993) and the risk
66 perception of communities exposed to potential volcanic activity (Carlino et al., 2008; Ricci et al.,
67 2013). On the other hand, the primary drivers of vulnerability may be socio-economic, cultural and
68 political, and so policy changes and reduction of social inequality are more important than merely
69 measuring vulnerability itself. As discussed later, this topic encompasses social and policy sciences

70 rather than volcanology. Other authors have debated the criteria adopted to identify the most risked
71 area in the Neapolitan volcanic district (e.g. the red zones), criticising the emergency plan of Vesuvius
72 or proposing an alternative perspective to reduce the risk (De Natale et al., 2020; De Vivo et al., 2010;
73 Dobran, 2000, 2007; Matsrolorenzo et al., 2006; Rolandi, 2010). Although this district has been
74 becoming increasingly vulnerable for about 50 years, only in recent times (starting from early 2000)
75 have attempts been made to reduce its exposed values, though unsuccessfully. Possibly, a more
76 general analysis, from both the historical and scientific points of view, to understand the reasons why
77 the attempts to reduce the volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area have systematically failed is necessary.
78 This paper does not intend to examine such a complex issue, which deserves a wider, longer and
79 multidisciplinary discussion, but sparing a thought for this topic is essential. This paper reports a brief
80 history of volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area and an account of recent studies and policies adopted
81 to reduce the risk. As it will be shown, new proposals to mitigate the volcanic risk of this area could
82 be ineffective if we do not analyse the reasons why previous attempts have failed. Furthermore, it is
83 important to define, as clearly as possible, the role of volcanologists in facing volcanic emergency
84 and risk education policies in this highly urbanised area.

85

86 **2. The first human settlements of Neapolitan volcanoes**

87 The history of Neapolitan volcanoes harks back to before the birth of Christ, when the first stable
88 population settled in the plain along Vesuvius and the Campi Flegrei caldera (Pappalardo, 2007). The
89 great Greek geographer Strabo (64 B.C.–19 A.D) provided in his work “Geography” one of the first
90 descriptions of the Campania Plain and its surroundings, commenting on the splendour of these
91 places, dominated by the presence of Vesuvius and bordered by mountains extending along the sea
92 forming the Gulf of Naples (Strabone, XIV-XXIII A.D.). The first and most ancient human
93 settlements in Campania date back to the Palaeolithic period, primarily along the coasts of the
94 Sorrento Peninsula. The first evidence of disrupted human activity due to volcanic eruption in this
95 area dates back about 3,800 years (Mastrolorenzo et al., 2006). This is in fact the age of an ancient
96 Bronze Age village near Nola, about 11 km north of Mount Vesuvius, where archaeologists excavated
97 a human village with several findings in a state of excellent conservation. A massive explosion of
98 Vesuvius (the Avellino eruption, 3,800 years ago) had sealed the village beneath hot ash
99 (Mastrolorenzo et al., 2006), in a fate similar to that of Pompei a few thousand years later. That was
100 when the natural environment of Vesuvius showed a less friendly face, and humankind was
101 confronted with unexpected adversities. In fact, the geology and the landscape of Campania were the
102 chief attractions for the populations colonising this area, which Romans later called “Campania felix”
103 (from Latin “felix” = lucky, happy) (Montone, 2010). The expression derives not only from the beauty

104 of the place but also from its soil, made fertile by the volcanic activity, the presence of streams and
105 the gentle climate. The broad river and coastal plains, the modest mountain ranges overlooking them,
106 the steam and the various volcanic areas, the thermal waters and natural coastal inlets to protect sailors
107 – all combined together to transform the area into the crossroads of different civilisations (Carlino,
108 2019). The Campi Flegrei area is also linked to a myth, possibly due to the suggestion recalled by the
109 continuous emission of hot steam and the boiling of mud pots. It was there, along the Lake of Averno
110 (a volcanic crater close to the city of Pozzuoli), that the ancients placed the cave of the Cumaean
111 Sibyl (motioned in the famous literary work “L’Eneide” of Virgilio) and the entrance to the afterlife
112 (Azcuay, 2013). This crater lake exhaled vapours and volcanic gases that probably kept some animals
113 away, from which it derived its Greek name, “aoèrnov”, that is, “without birds”. Following the
114 migration of the Etruscan population, from central Italy to the Campania plain from the 9th to the 5th
115 century B.C., the first early urban centres were established (Maiuri, 1957). These immigrants
116 predominantly settled in the fertile lowlands of the Campanian Plain, along the rivers or close to the
117 river-mouths. With the arrival of the Greeks and the development of maritime trade, the inhabitants
118 of Campania migrated towards coastal areas and started settling in the volcanic areas of Ischia (called
119 “Pithecusae”) and, later, of Campi Flegrei and Vesuvius (D’Ascia, 1867). The Greeks arrived
120 between the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., from a long and narrow island close to the coast of modern-
121 day south-east Greece, namely Euboea. On the Phlegrean side, ancient signs of stable habitation
122 dating to between the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. were discovered in the Rione Terra, the old town in
123 present-day Pozzuoli (Pappalardo, 2007). The historical centre of this town stands on a small volcanic
124 promontory that, at that time, played host to a modest Cumaean mooring. Between 529 and 528 B.C.,
125 some Samnite exiles, banned by the tyrant Polycrates, founded a colony on the promontory named
126 Dikaiarchia, meaning “Just Government”, integrated into a territory still controlled from Cumae
127 (Annecchino, 1996). In 194 B.C., the Romans transformed this small colony into a town called
128 Puteolis (hereafter Pozzuoli), thus named for its abundance of thermal springs. The town soon became
129 an imposing port and warehousing area for large quantities of foodstuffs. Earlier, the Greeks had
130 moved eastwards, forming the first inhabited elements of the city of Naples (called Pharthenophe),
131 between Mount Echia (Fig. 3), an upland of volcanic origin, and the island of Megaride where Castel
132 dell’Ovo stands today (Ghirelli, 2015). The Greek population was faced with the hazard of volcanoes
133 on the island of Ischia. In fact, their migration from Ischia towards the coast of Campania was possibly
134 influenced by the eruptions in the western and southern parts of the island from the 5th century B.C.
135 onwards. Amidst the lavas and the ash of the 5th century B.C. eruption and close to the port of Ischia,
136 an old ground level was excavated containing potsherds and other archaeological finds from the 6th
137 and 5th centuries B.C., demonstrating the existence of an ancient Greek settlement destroyed in the
138 eruption (Carlino et al., 2010a). Strabo bore witness to the eruptions in the Greco-Roman era, writing:
139 “...in ancient times a series of extraordinary events took place on the island of Pithecusae. [...] when

140 *Mount Epomeo, which rises in the middle of the island, was shaken by earthquakes and erupted fire*
141 *and (again) swept away everything that lay between itself and the shore and into the sea. At the same*
142 *time a part of the ground, reduced to ash and thrown upwards, fell back onto the island like a*
143 *maelstrom and the sea retreated for a distance of three stadia (about 500 m) and, flowing back shortly*
144 *afterward, flooded the island, extinguishing the fire. Such was the deafening noise that the inhabitants*
145 *of the mainland fled from the coast to the inner regions of Campania.”* The towns of Naples and
146 Pozzuoli and the villages in the Vesuvius area, such as Pompei, were expanding rapidly, with its
147 citizens having to deal with the adverse forces generated by the volcanic nature of the area. While in
148 historical times (starting from the former civilised human settlements), the Campi Flegrei caldera and
149 the island of Ischia generated small eruptions, the Vesuvius, contrarily, demonstrated its power with
150 the 79 A.D. eruption, which seriously affected the cities of Pompei and Ercolano and the southern
151 part of the volcano (Giacomelli et al., 2003). During the longest period of expansion of the Western
152 Roman Empire, the cities around the volcanoes had expanded progressively. The volcanic activity of
153 Ischia in the early centuries before Christ and its insular nature had, however, contained its
154 demographic expansion. On the other hand, the quiescence of the Campi Flegrei in eruptive terms
155 did not imply that the volcanic nature of these places had been forgotten; the continuous puffs of
156 steam and the hot thermal springs served as haunting symbols. However, in the minds of the people
157 at least, the hostile nature of these places, sometimes sinister, was associated with the mood of the
158 gods and not the actual nature of the area itself (Carlino, 2019). In this emerged the perception of
159 natural disasters as divine punishments for humankind, a view that remained rooted in culture up to
160 the 17th century (Cocco, 2012).

161 **3. Towards a modern view of volcanoes**

162 With Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), a gradual change in the approach to the study of earth science and
163 the risk related to natural phenomena occurred. A crucial moment in the history of volcanic risk in
164 the Neapolitan area came in 1631 when, after a long quiescence, Vesuvius awoke with an explosive
165 (sub-plinian) eruption, beginning an almost continuous eruptive activity that ceased only in 1944 at
166 the end of World War II (Cocco, 2012; Kilburn & McGuire, 2001; Rosi et al., 1993). However, here
167 too a theological meaning was attributed to this calamitous event, as an expiation of punishments. In
168 this sense, the eruption of 1631 symbolised an event that, in the coming centuries, affected not only
169 volcanology but also other political, sociological, literary and, above all, religious disciplines (Scarth,
170 2009). Although Aristotelian science still dominated in the 17th century, it was also the beginning of
171 its end as a result of the works of the Galileans and Cartesians (Fiorentino, 2015).

172 The period witnessed immense cultural transformations, with new impulses in the field of scientific
173 research with the introduction of the experimental method by Galileo (Rossi, 2020). Further support

174 and impetus to the scientific revolution were lent by the foundation of the Royal Society of London
175 in 1662 and of Académie Royale des Sciences in Paris. Although this revolution determined a new
176 perspective that views losses as resulting from the effects of extreme natural events, religious terms
177 of reference remain a vital element for a significant portion of Neapolitan people in the perception of
178 volcanic eruptions (Chester et al., 2008, 2015). Actually, the Vesuvius eruption of 1631 was the first
179 event that focused attention on the problem of volcanic risk. In fact, the suggestion to mitigate the
180 volcanic risk at Vesuvius was first formally proposed by the viceroy of Naples, Emmanuele Fonseca,
181 in 1632. The viceroy placed an epigraph in the town of Portici (in the Granatello area), inviting the
182 local population to abandon the Vesuvius area and recalling the catastrophic effects of the 1631
183 eruption. Many years later, for this inscription, the expression “*the paradox of Granatello*” was
184 coined by Nazzaro (2001), referring to the reluctance of Vesuvians to consider the risk (Nazzaro,
185 2001; Gugg, 2018). The continuous activity of Vesuvius pushed many scholars and artists to visit the
186 volcano (during the famous Grand Tour epoch) and, at the urging of few intellectuals, the idea of a
187 volcano observatory was born gradually (Luongo, 1997). Particularly, an important impetus came
188 from Sir William Hamilton (1730–1803), who arrived in Naples in 1764 as the British “Envoy
189 Extraordinary to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies”. Hamilton’s amateur activity inspired the intuition
190 of active volcano surveillance and later, in 1841 (under the Bourbon Kingdom), the first
191 volcanological observatory in the world was founded, the Vesuvius Observatory (Cubellis et al.,
192 2015). It was a great moment for the Neapolitan School of Volcanology. Then, the interest of this
193 new institution was mainly devoted to the observation of the eruptive activity and to the development
194 of new instruments to monitor the volcano dynamic, such as the electromagnetic seismograph
195 designed by Luigi Palmieri (1855–1896) (Palmieri, 1880). Thus, the attention was mainly directed at
196 the volcanic hazard.

197 **4. Volcanic risk increase**

198 With the increase of population in Neapolitan area the problem of volcanic risk grew critical, because
199 of the exponential rise of the exposed value. The increase of population in the Neapolitan volcanic
200 district was possibly sustainable, with respect to volcanic risk, up to the economic boom of Italy
201 following the Second World War (Carlino, 2019). Immediately after this war, western civilisation
202 suffered a long economic crisis. A global-scale response to the crisis was the activation of the
203 Marshall Plan (the European Recovery Program, lasting from April 1948 to December 1951), whose
204 aim was the creation of stable economic conditions to guarantee the survival of democratic
205 institutions. The plan contributed to the renewal of the western European chemical, engineering and
206 steel industries and to a rise in gross national products between 15 and 25% (The Marshal Plan;
207 <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/marshall-plan-1>). The demographic increase in the

208 province of Naples and the consequent expansion of urban areas since the end of the Second World
209 War have been largely influenced by the country's economic choices following the Industrial
210 Revolution, a process beginning in the 19th century. For instance, the first mechanical plants began
211 in Pozzuoli in Campi Flegrei where, in 1885, a factory for the construction of naval artillery was set
212 up. The increase of population and postwar industrial activity mainly involved the Vesuvius area in
213 conjunction with the volcano's quiescent state following its most recent eruption in 1944 (Carlino,
214 2019). The Campi Flegrei were also affected by a migratory flow (albeit to a lesser extent) particularly
215 in the districts of Fuorigrotta and Bagnoli (located inside the caldera), reflecting a strong phase of
216 urban growth, especially following the expansion of the Bagnoli industrial area in 1954 (Andriello et
217 al., 1991). The social and environmental change within the Campi Flegrei area had been drastic and
218 often sudden, but the area around Vesuvius was even more badly affected. This latter came under
219 attack from rampant "cementification" not following any town planning criteria, especially
220 concerning the volcanic risk. In the westernmost sector of the volcano, at the border with the eastern
221 outskirts of Naples, oil refineries and various mechanical industries were developed along the coastal
222 strip, while between Portici and Torre Annunziata, residential areas expanded enormously (D'Aprile,
223 2014). Agricultural land in many areas was converted into construction sites so that the landscape of
224 farming and forestry use was transformed into a typically urban, densely populated environment,
225 contrasting sharply with Vesuvius in the background. Between the 1950s and 1990s, the entire
226 Vesuvius area witnessed uncontrolled speculative building with an exponential increase in residential
227 areas, so as to make unrecognisable the boundaries between the towns that, especially in the coastal
228 sector, became merely an expanse of housing and villas (Carlino, 2019; Luongo, 1997). In the whole
229 metropolitan area belonging to Naples, an increase of 1,000,000 residents occurred between 1950 and
230 1980 (Censimento Popolazione Città Metropolitana Napoli, 1861–2001). In this chaotic growth, the
231 architectural beauties around Vesuvius leftover from the time of the Grand Tour, the historic villas,
232 were engulfed and new buildings covered the lava flows arising from Vesuvius's most recent activity
233 (Lancaster, 2008). This was a bad sign of the decline of local culture and of the corruption of the
234 political establishment (Berdini, 2010; Curci et al., 2018).

235 With the onset of globalisation and the expansion of international markets, the industrial activities in
236 the areas of Campi Flegrei went bankrupt. This definitively closed Bagnoli's industrial district in
237 1992 leading to an attempt to reclaim the area, with numerous halts and course changes, taking place
238 in the sector east of the city of Naples closer to Vesuvius. Meanwhile, the unbroken quiescence of
239 Vesuvius since 1944 gradually transformed the volcano from a perceived risk to a "passive" actor in
240 the landscape. This step resulted in inevitable demographic growth that did not take the security
241 implications into account while the boom in the construction industry extended the cities around the
242 volcano with increasingly invasive settlements. Between 1950 and 1981, the town of Portici alone,

243 now one of the most densely populated places in the world, saw the population rise from just over
244 30,000 to about 84,000 (ISTAT Censimento popolazione e abitazioni). The cities around Vesuvius
245 extended centripetally, approaching more and more frequently the areas repeatedly affected by recent
246 eruptions. If the quiescence of Vesuvius has caused a progressive decline in the perception of volcanic
247 risk, the territorial management policies until the end of the last century have continuously postponed
248 to posterity the issue of the risks involved in spite of the continual efforts of the scientific community
249 (Carlino et al., 2008). Only relatively recently, following the unrest in the Campi Flegrei caldera in
250 1982–84, scientists, local authorities and the Civil Protection faced the problem of excessive
251 anthropic pressure in the Neapolitan volcanic area, but an organic plan for decongesting one of the
252 areas of the greatest volcanic risk is still lacking.

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255 **5. The last experience of volcanic emergency in the Neapolitan district: Pozzuoli 1970–1984**

256 A fundamental moment in the history of volcano emergency in Campania was the episode of volcanic
257 unrest of Campi Flegrei caldera affecting the town of Pozzuoli in 1970–72 and 1982–84, respectively.
258 During those years, the ground of the town experienced the maximum cumulative uplift of about 3
259 meters, forcing the local authorities to evacuate the town during both episodes (Barberi et al., 1984).
260 By the beginning of the 1970s, the phenomenon of *bradyseism* (a Greek origin word which describes
261 the up and down movement of the ground) was largely forgotten, since the last time it had occurred
262 was more than 400 years before when an uplift of about 20 m culminated in the eruption of Monte
263 Nuovo in 1538, the most recent volcanic event at Campi Flegrei (Di Vito et al., 2016). In 1970,
264 monitoring networks for volcano surveillance did not exist in the area. In fact, the inversion in the
265 movement of the ground was signalled by fishermen, who suddenly managed to pass with their small
266 boats beneath an arch at the entrance of the small harbour of Pozzuoli while standing, while it had
267 normally been necessary to bend down (Carlino, 2019). The uplift, in the first phase, was almost
268 aseismic, while the Vesuvius Observatory decided to undertake a new elevation survey performed by
269 the engineers of the Genio Civile to estimate the real amount of the ground uplift. The results
270 indicated that the floor of the Serapeum of Pozzuoli (a ruin of an ancient Roman market) had risen
271 by about 0.70 m since the last surveys and that the area affected by this phenomenon included the
272 entire town (Longo, 2019; Luongo, 2013). The concern about the volcano uplift focused the attention
273 on the hazard related to a possible eruption. There was no consensus among scientists; thus, scientific
274 meetings took place to understand the possible evolution of the phenomenon might and the associated
275 volcanic risk. Experts such as the volcanologists Alfred Rittman and Izumi Yokoyama participated

276 in the debate together with the researchers of Vesuvius Observatory. However, the physical model
277 adopted by the Japanese researchers associated the observed uplift with a high probability of an
278 eruption. In 1972, the centre of Pozzuoli was evacuated, although the unrest was characterised by a
279 modest seismic activity, while the maximum uplift was about 1.7 m and ended without eruption
280 (Yokoyama, 1970). The evacuees were placed in the new Toiano district, whose construction was
281 accelerated during the final stages of the bradyseismic episode. The 1970–72 bradyseism crisis,
282 possibly was not handled in a transparent way, and this experience was complicated by the lack of
283 sufficient knowledge about the physics of the volcano phenomenon (Longo, 2019). This last fact,
284 along with the virtual absence of a monitoring network, determined the decision to evacuate the centre
285 of Pozzuoli, although the perceptible signs of a possible eruption were low, and all the local residents
286 criticised this decision. Nonetheless, it was during that period that earth science experienced new
287 important studies and projects, also strengthening the monitoring networks and the assessment of
288 seismic and volcanic hazards in the world.

289 Following the Campi Flegrei caldera unrest of 1970–72, the Italian peninsula was severely tested
290 with the devastating earthquakes of Friuli in 1976 (leaving about 1,000 people dead and more than
291 100,000 displaced) and the one in Campania-Basilicata in 1980 (with about 3,000 deaths and 280,000
292 dis- placed) (Boschi & Bordieri, 1998). Subsequently, a National Civil Protection service was
293 established in Italy. Thus, when a new bradyseismic crisis occurred in Pozzuoli in 1982, the scientific
294 community and the national and local authorities were better prepared to handle the emergency
295 (Luongo, 2013). The Vesuvius Observatory had strengthened its surveillance network so that,
296 throughout 1972–1981, it was possible to record a tendency to ground subsidence and a new uplift in
297 1982. In the summer of that year, it became clear that a new episode of bradyseism was underway
298 (Cannatelli et al., 2020). It was most dramatic compared to the previous one. Continuous and
299 significant seismic activity was recorded since spring 1983. Pozzuoli was shaken by hundreds of
300 seismic events a day, while the population was frightened by the roars accompanying the earthquakes
301 and the continued ground movements which wrought widespread damage on the city's ancient
302 buildings. A further increase of seismic activity occurred between September and October 1983,
303 peaking on 4th October with a shallow magnitude 4.0 earthquake, spreading panic among the
304 population, damaging several buildings in the historic centre of Pozzuoli and being clearly felt in
305 Naples (Branno et al., 1984). The ground uplift in the Pozzuoli area reached a maximum rate of the
306 order of centimetres per day. The main concern about the situation was primarily related to the
307 damage to the buildings caused by the shallow earthquakes (2–3 km in depth). Accordingly, the
308 Vesuvius Observatory and the National Group for Volcanology, responsible for surveillance,
309 presented a seismic hazard map of the Phlegraean area, demonstrating that the level of risk in the
310 historical centre of Pozzuoli had become very high, especially because of the high vulnerability of

311 the buildings at risk (Luongo, 2013). A further concern related to the possibility of an eruption, for
312 which the recorded uplift and the seismic activity appeared as clear precursors, although the
313 likelihood of an eruption was considered low by the director of the Vesuvius Observatory. On 1st
314 April 1984, a new dramatic seismic crisis, with continuous swarms throughout the morning, hit the
315 town of Pozzuoli. At this stage, the problem of the evacuation was faced, also considering the
316 possibility of an eruption inside the caldera of Campi Flegrei. In collaboration with the Central
317 Government, the evacuation plan was drawn up and, following the meetings between monitoring staff
318 and civil defence authorities it was decided to evacuate about 25,000 people from the centre of
319 Pozzuoli. The evacuees were relocated to the new settlement area of Monteruscello, which was built
320 in a few years, a few kilometres north-west of the centre of Pozzuoli, considered a safer area than the
321 coastal strip.

322 During the 1984 emergency, an effective communication system was established between the
323 monitors, the Civil Protection Service and the citizenry, and the crisis was handled with maximum
324 transparency, especially in light of the 1970 experience (Luongo, 2013). Particularly, the monitoring
325 info-centre, close to Pozzuoli, was activated to ensure the correct management and spreading of
326 information about the ongoing events. Meanwhile, as the plan was actualised the unrest seemed to
327 decrease in intensity, and in December 1984 the uplifting and seismic activity ceased, marking the
328 end of the crisis (Barberi & Carapezza, 1996). Pozzuoli remained for few years like a “ghost town”
329 while local and central governments were deciding on the future of the city. Pozzuoli was later rebuilt
330 without limiting the anthropic pressure that should have been contained within thresholds that would
331 make the volcanic risk acceptable. Today, the municipality of Pozzuoli has about 82,000 residents,
332 representing a coveted residential site for Neapolitan people.

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336 **6. The debate about the volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area**

337 The subject of volcanic risk and its mitigation in the Neapolitan area has very important implications
338 because this zone involves at least 1,500,000 people who are potentially exposed to a very large
339 eruption (Mastrolorenzo et al., 2006). Otherwise, given the long history of volcanic risk in the
340 Neapolitan area and the current very high risk of the area, two preliminary inquiries are required: i)
341 can we find a new paradigm or an alternative plan to reduce the high risk? and ii) how feasible is it
342 in the Neapolitan area? We do not have a unique response to the questions, but to analyse the issue,

343 we have to revert to the last Campi Flegrei caldera unrest between 1982 and 1984, culminating in the
344 evacuation of the town of Pozzuoli (Barberi & Carapezza, 1996). After this event, a strong debate
345 ensued (among scientists, citizens and politicians) about the possible solutions to reduce the volcanic
346 risk in the densely inhabited Neapolitan area.

347 Between 1980 and 1990, the problem of volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area was considered by the
348 National Group of Volcanology (GNV) (see De Vivo et al., 2010 and references therein), while the
349 one of territorial planning was discussed during several Italian workshops, and the few solutions
350 focused primarily on two actions (Leone, 1987; Ulisse, 1984): i) the short-term one with the
351 preparation of the evacuation plans, ii) the long-term one, which provided the actions and methods,
352 aimed to reduce the demographic pressure in the riskiest areas. The latter is not simple, because it
353 cannot be forced, while developing a new organisational set-up of the whole Campania Region would
354 be necessary by planning a “new geography” (Leone, 1987) of the services industry and the
355 productive activities, allowing a spontaneous relocation of the residents from the risk areas.

356 After the last Campi Flegrei caldera unrest ended in 1984, the volcano rested again (up to 2005), but
357 not the debate about volcanic risk. Later, responding to the solicitations and concerns emanating from
358 the scientific and institutional world, and following the foundation of the Italian Civil Protection, the
359 attention was mainly focused on Vesuvius, the most inhabited volcano of the district. The volcanic
360 risk in this area was evaluated by Scandone et al., (1993), in terms of human losses, and according to
361 the equation: $Risk = Exposed\ Value \times Vulnerability \times Hazard$ (Blong, 1996). The authors evaluated
362 the hazard based on the entire history of the volcano and identified the events likely to cause loss of
363 human lives as those with Volcanic Explosivity Index (VEI) $> \sim 3$. Later on, the first evacuation plan
364 for the Vesuvius area was released by the Civil Protection in 1995.

365 After its foundation in 1999, the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV) became the
366 reference scientific institution for the Civil Protection, to assess the volcanic hazard and continuously
367 update it for Neapolitan volcanoes. As regards Vesuvius, the extension of the most hazardous zone
368 (i.e. the Red Zone) involves about 600,000 inhabitants, who must be evacuated in case of eruption
369 (Protezione Civile: Update of the National Emergency Plan for Vesuvius). The extension of the Red
370 Zone was obtained considering a medium energy scenario for the next eruption (a sub-plinian
371 eruption) such as the one in 1631. The emergency plan for Vesuvius foresees a part of the population
372 spontaneously moving away from the Red Zone during the pre-alarm phase (Fig. 1). Depending on
373 the state of the volcano, the actions to be taken are defined within the emergency plan by the different
374 levels of alertness in which the scientific and monitoring activities are decided upon depending on
375 the assessment of the hazard. The lowest level (a “green” alert level) corresponds to the quiescence
376 of the volcano, during which there are no significant changes in the parameters being monitored. If

377 these changes are detected, however, the protocol provides for a transition to a level of attention
378 (“yellow”), during which there is an intensification of monitoring activities and a more frequent
379 assessment of the condition of the volcano by the Civil Protection agency and the Italian
380 Commissione Grandi Rischi (Major Risks Commission). The levels above this are those of pre-alarm
381 (“orange”) and alarm (“red”), which, for the latter, involve the evacuation of the population from the
382 Red Zone. The Vesuvius evacuation plan has been updated and modified during the time. At present,
383 at least three days (compared to the previous three weeks) would be required to effectively evacuate
384 600,000 inhabitants. This should correspond to the actual possibility of forecasting the eruption with
385 this level of forewarning. The last choice was also based on the forecasting experiences of the 1980
386 Mt. Saint Helens (USA) and 1991 Pinatubo (Philippine) eruptions (Pinatubo Volcano Observatory
387 Team, 1991; Swanson et al, 1983). The plan posed, among the scientific community, a number of
388 concerns and criticisms about the actual possibility of forecasting the next eruption in advance and
389 evacuating at least 600,000 people at risk. In the framework of this debate, an alternative plan to
390 mitigate the volcanic risk of Vesuvius area was proposed by Flavio Dobran (*Vesuvius 2000 plan*,
391 Dobran 2006, 2007). Although the first work of Flavio Dobran was published in 2006, the
392 dissemination of his plan took place a few years earlier, with an intense information campaign around
393 the Vesuvius area. More than an emergency or evacuation plan, *Vesuvius 2000* proposed a new
394 paradigm of development to reduce the risk of the area. The main intention of this proposal was “...to
395 produce guidelines for transforming high-risk areas around Vesuvius into safe and prosperous
396 communities. This would be accomplished through interdisciplinary projects involving engineers,
397 environmentalists, urban planners, economists, educators, geologists, sociologists, historians, and
398 the public” (Dobran, 2007). Among the general aims of *Vesuvius 2000* plan, the decreasing of the
399 resident population density in the most-risky areas was proposed, as well as improving the resistance
400 of the buildings to seismic shaking, the quality of infrastructure and the resilience of urban centres.
401 Furthermore, Dobran (2006, 2007) showed that given the strong historical and social connection
402 between “Vesuvius people” and their land, the diminishing of urban pressure in most of the risky
403 zones represented a very long-term aim, needing a complete social, cultural, urbanistic and economic
404 reconsideration of the Vesuvius area and surroundings. This long-term action will minimise the
405 economic and social costs of the evacuation of people from the red zone in case of an eruption. The
406 great challenge of the ambitious *Vesuvius 2000* plan was therefore that people around the volcano
407 acquired the awareness of the environment in which they lived and participated in the solution of this
408 difficult conundrum (Dobran, 2006).

409 After the solution proposed by Dobran (2006, 2007), a wide literature about the methods and the
410 actions devoted to reduction and management of volcanic risk, and also of natural risks in general,
411 was proposed by different authors, and in which most detailed descriptions of the limits of each

412 solution and the case history were reported (Barcklay et al., 2008, 2015; Chester et al., 2000; Donovan
413 and Oppenheimer, 2016; Fearnley et al., 2017; Jenkins & Haynes, 2011; Hansjürgens et al., 2008;
414 Hicks et al., 2014; Hossain et al., 2017; Newhall & Punongbayan, 1996; Papale, 2017; Peterson et al.,
415 1993; Petrazzuoli & Zuccaro, 2004; Petrosino et al., 2004; Small & Naumann, 2001; Spence et al.,
416 2007; Usamah & Haynes, 2012; Wisner, 2003). Furthermore, some of the above researches also
417 demonstrate that a volcanic resettlement program must be directed by meaningful consultation with
418 the impacted community, as also suggested by Dobran (2006), which also shares in the decision
419 making.

420 What happened in the period following the first releasing of the Vesuvius emergency plan and of the
421 alternative paradigm *Vesuvius 2000* proposed by Flavio Dobran? The latter was not welcomed by the
422 political establishment and remained a mere proposal. On the other hand, the former (the institutional
423 one) only partially guaranteed the restraint or decreasing of anthropic pressure around the volcano.
424 To deal with this problem, a new plan called *Vesuvia* ([https://www.viveretraivulcani.it/il-progetto-
425 vesuvia/](https://www.viveretraivulcani.it/il-progetto-vesuvia/)) was approved in 2003 by the Campania Region (Legge regionale n. 21/2003, “Legge del
426 Vesuvio”, http://www.sito.regione.campania.it/leggi_regionali2003/lr21_2003.htm). The intent of
427 this project was to lighten the demographic pressure around the Vesuvius volcano. This intent would
428 be promoted by offering economic incentives (up to 30 thousand euros) to the population (living in
429 the red zone) willing to relocate themselves outside the dangerous areas. The project expects to reduce
430 the number of people living in the red zone over a period of about 20 years by evacuating at least
431 100,000 people from this zone (Gugg, 2018). A further aim of *Vesuvia* was also the reconversion of
432 available buildings into tourist reception facilities, to create an opportunity of valorisation of the great
433 cultural and natural heritage of the Vesuvius volcano. ([http://www.cngeologi.it/wp-
434 content/uploads/2017/08/Casa-Italia_Rapporto-sicurezza-rischi_naturali-patrimonio-abitativo.pdf](http://www.cngeologi.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Casa-Italia_Rapporto-sicurezza-rischi_naturali-patrimonio-abitativo.pdf)).
435 Three years from the launch of the project, there was a reduction of residents in the red zone of only
436 0.1%, prompting the promoters of the project to abandon the endeavour. It was a resounding flop.
437 The reasons for the failure were described by Gugg (2018). Among the reasons reported, the lack of
438 involvement of the mayors and the local communities in the development of the project was probably
439 the most critical. Additionally, as also described by the *Vesuvius 2000* plan (Dobran 2006, 2007), a
440 relocation of people from the red zone outside the Vesuvius volcano is very unlikely without long-
441 term economic and social policies stimulating Vesuvius people to move to safer zones. It is clear that
442 in a complex social, cultural and urban context such as that of Naples and surroundings, the choice
443 to reduce the volcanic risk by relocating a part of people in the red zones (Campi Flegrei and
444 Vesuvius) outside the most-risky areas and by increasing the volcanic perception is a very gruelling
445 challenge (Carlino, 2019). Furthermore, the policies to improve the vulnerability of edifices against
446 disasters (and reduce the risk) have rarely been adopted in Italy, as demonstrated for instance by

447 heavy damages suffered by many cities after moderate earthquakes recently (Valensise et al., 2017).
448 The main issues, in this case, are related to the actual perception of risk in general (as well as of
449 volcanic risk in particular), but mainly to the morals and personal profit of politicians in taking
450 specific actions to reduce the risk and to other social and political problems of the Neapolitan area
451 (Carlino et al., 2008; Donovan and Oppenheimer, 2015; Donovan, 2019; Luongo, 1997). For instance,
452 political timescales generally limit the amount of capital invested in the volcanic risk reduction.
453 Basically; as reported by Donovan (2019), “*if a politician is only in power for 4 years*” (and this time
454 is the best case in Italy!) “*the probability of an eruption at a particular volcano within that timeframe*
455 *is usually very low, and so, the personal-political cost-benefit analysis indicates that there are more*
456 *socially acceptable policies to invest in*”. This is possibly one of the main reasons why a long-term
457 plan for risk reduction such as *Vesuvius2000* was rejected by the political establishment. The example
458 reported by Donovan (2019) appears particularly true for the Neapolitan area, where the volcanic risk
459 increased exponentially during the last 50 years, and no policies have contained this trend. This aspect
460 was also debated by De Vivo et al., (2010) who stated that while the Italian Civil Protection tries to
461 convince people to dislocate from the risk zone, it does not take a stand against the illegal buildings
462 in the red zone. Otherwise, from the institutional point of view, the latter problem does not involve
463 Civil Protection, because the management control of illegal buildings and their compliance with the
464 seismic risk primarily involves the municipalities (*Decreto Legislativo 18 agosto 2000, n. 267; Testo*
465 *unico delle disposizioni legislative e regolamentari in materia edilizia, d.P.R. n. 380/2001*). In this
466 regard, the seismic risk associated with the volcano-tectonics earthquakes is not neglectable as well,
467 at least for Campi Flegrei and Ischia. A representative case is the Island of Ischia. In 1883, the island
468 was hit by a moderate and shallow earthquake (with magnitude around 4.5, Cubellis and Luongo,
469 1998), which devastated its northern sector (Casamicciola town) and had more than 2300 victims
470 (Carlino et al., 2010b). This event was followed by an almost seismic silence, up to 2017. At least
471 during the last 25 years, the scientific community urged the island local authorities and the
472 municipality of Casamicciola to take actions favouring the mitigation of seismic risk in the island
473 (Cubellis and Luongo, 1998; Luongo et al., 2012). However, this message went unnoticed, up to 21
474 August 2017, when an $M_L4.0$ earthquake occurred in Casamicciola town and caused two deaths, tens
475 of injuries and heavy damage in the upper part of the municipality (De Novellis et al., 2018). From
476 the above considerations, it appears that conciliating the emergency plans, drawing the red zones of
477 volcanoes, and regulating for the seismic risk, with the actual economic and land-use planning
478 policies in the Neapolitan area are a hard purpose to attain.

479 Recently, in August 2016, the emergency planning for the volcanic risk of the Campi Flegrei was
480 updated (Protezione Civile: Update of the National Emergency Plan for Campi Flegrei), and the area
481 of the new Red Zone to be evacuated as a precautionary measure in case of an eruption, was defined,

482 together with the Yellow Zone, which is potentially exposed to a high concentration of falling ash
483 (Fig. 1). As for Vesuvius, the Red Zone and the Yellow Zone were defined by the Civil Protection in
484 agreement with the Campania Region and based on the indications provided by the scientific
485 community. As a whole, and considering that an emergency plan for the island of Ischia (Gulf of
486 Naples) is still lacking, about 1,000,000 people could be directly affected by a moderate to large
487 eruption (VEI 3–4) in the red zones of Campi Flegrei and Vesuvius, respectively. The high number
488 of people exposed to the risk and the uncertainty in eruptions forecasting (Sparks, 2003) motivated
489 some authors to criticise the evacuation plans and the risk reduction policies in the Neapolitan district
490 (De Natale et al., 2020; Rolandi, 2010). Particularly and recently, De Natale et al. (2020) have
491 questioned how the very high volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area can be effectively mitigated. The
492 authors focused the attention on two evacuation-related problems: i) the extremely high number of
493 people to evacuate in case of an impending eruption; ii) the lack of plans today to rehabilitate such a
494 high number of evacuated people (600,000 and 700,000 for Campi Flegrei Caldera and Vesuvius,
495 respectively). It is important to highlight that some works criticising the evacuation plans (De Natale
496 et al., 2020; Dobran 2006) do not exclude their effectiveness if a number of actions to mitigate the
497 risk are carried on. Unfortunately, what we have seen during the last 40 years of volcanic risk
498 management in the Neapolitan area is a predominance of emergency policies in respect to that of
499 prevention. The result is that the present volcanic risk, given the current high values of society,
500 appears unacceptable.

501 **7. The role of volcanologists**

502 In the framework of the discussed topics, a fundamental issue is the role of volcanologists in
503 managing volcanic risk and crises. It was, in many cases, misinterpreted by people living in the
504 Neapolitan area. The role and responsibilities of volcanologists in volcanic hazard evaluation, risk
505 mitigation and crisis response have been outlined by the International Association for Volcanology
506 and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior (IAVCEI). Their main responsibility is to improve the scientific
507 knowledge of volcanoes to better understand how they work and provide the most robust eruption
508 forecasts, and to educate the local and global community (mainly exposed to eruptions) to the
509 volcanic risk, making people more perceptive of the risk itself. The latter is fundamental to evoking
510 an amenable response from people to an evacuation (IAVCEI, 2016). Anyway, the main task of
511 volcanologists is to provide as robust a forecast of an eruption as possible. It is well-known how
512 problematic it is to obtain a clear picture of the progression of volcano processes during unrests and
513 to understand what the actual state of the volcano is (critical state or not). In general (but not always),
514 as the eruption approaches the number and the amplitude (or energy) of geophysical and geochemical
515 signals increases, the uncertainty in the forecast should decrease (Carlino, 2019; Decker, 1986;

516 Kilburn, 2003; Robertson et al., 2016; Sparks, 2003; Sparks & Cashman, 2017;) (Fig. 4). An unsolved
517 question is whether, and at what moment, the volcano approaches the critical state during an unrest;
518 that is the moment when the physical processes occurring within the volcano are irreversible and the
519 volcano erupts (Fig. 4). This is the most critical issue because the promulgation of a false alarm or a
520 missed alarm will adversely affect 600,000–1,500,000 people living in the Neapolitan area (De Natale
521 et al., 2020). The problem of false alarms and of uncertainty in volcano forecast is chronic in
522 volcanology and also relates to communications and managing the expectations that a population
523 have of scientific capacity over long term. The uncertainty in anticipating eruptions may reflect the
524 complexity of volcanic systems, the level of monitoring networks and the complex multidisciplinary
525 decision-making process during a volcanic crisis (Winson et al., 2014; Harris, 2015b). During the last
526 20 years, the monitoring networks for the surveillance of the Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei and Ischia
527 volcanoes have been greatly improved, reaching one of the best standards worldwide
528 (www.ov.ingv.it). This effort should correspond to a reduction of the uncertainty in forecasting the
529 next eruption although it depends on the capacity of volcanologists to correctly decipher the volcano
530 signals. Beyond the efforts of scientists to improve their understanding of volcanic processes and
531 provide more robust forecasts, communicating the systemic uncertainty of the forecast to the public
532 is fundamental. This can be done effectively only with a proficient direct communication network
533 between volcanologists and the media (Haynes et al, 2008; Winson et al., 2014).

534 *7.1 Volcanologists and media*

535 The relationship between volcanologists and media is also a very important topic, particularly when
536 the communication of an ongoing volcanic crisis involves large metropolitan areas like Naples and
537 its surroundings. The example of what occurred during the 1982–84 unrest is emblematic of this view.
538 During that crisis, a unique channel of communication was established between the Vesuvius
539 Observatory and the press while the observatory was continuously communicating with the Minister
540 for the Coordination of the Civil Protection (Luongo, 2013). The activation of the information centre
541 for the citizens of Pozzuoli and the straight link between the latter and the direction of the Vesuvius
542 Observatory generated confidence among people. How would it have turned out if the same crisis
543 had happened today? The unrest and the evacuation at Pozzuoli occurred in an era without the internet
544 and social media (Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp) which, nowadays, represent the main rapid
545 dissemination channels of news and information. Furthermore, the “tabloidization” of the news has
546 also resulted in the use of strong, exaggerated words, headlines and images to support a particular
547 frame (Harris, 2015a). Social media platforms are disruptors of traditional communication, opening
548 up new opportunities for scientists to communicate (Dong et al., 2020) but, on the other hand,
549 bestowing the right to evaluate or criticise scientific decisions on everyone. This could lead to

550 misinterpretations or distortions of scientific broadcasts and information and, consequently, to false
551 alarms or unjustified panic among the population, in case of a volcanic crisis (Harris, 2015a). This
552 circumstance, albeit not related to a volcanic crisis, occurred recently before the commencement of
553 the Campi Flegrei Deep Drilling Project, at Campi Flegrei, a project aimed at scientifically
554 investigating the caldera (Carlino, 2019). The project worried many local residents about the possible
555 disturbance that the scientific drilling would unleash in the volcanic system. Just before the onset of
556 the drilling, the declarations spreading on social networks and newspapers assumed an increasingly
557 alarming tone (sometimes to the limit of the paradoxical) such as to seriously worry the municipal
558 administration of Naples, which had cleared the drilling. The climax was reached in October 2010
559 when the national newspaper “Il Mattino” led with the front-page title: “If you touch the volcano,
560 Naples will explode” (Carlino, 2019, page 265). The project was temporarily suspended by the Naples
561 administration to further clarify its aim and associated risk. This fact highlights that the position of
562 volcanologists in communicating the hazard and the risk in densely inhabited regions like Naples is
563 very tricky because the communication occurs within a complex social system where many people
564 exposed to the risk are involved. Furthermore, a number of studies demonstrate that Neapolitans have
565 a low perception of risk and a low level of risk education (Carlino et al., 2010b; Ricci et al., 2013).

566 As a whole, beyond the effort that scientists are expending to improve the robustness of the volcanic
567 eruptions forecast, a further effort is necessary to promulgate the culture of volcanic risk and promote
568 open debates with the local population and authorities. In other words, volcanologists should be more
569 present on the territory (not only during an ongoing volcanic unrest) and they should be an open book,
570 not an acquired skill (Fearnley et al., 2017; Goodstain, 2010). This approach is fundamental to
571 improving the confidence of people in a scientific institution such as INGV.

572

573 **8. Conclusions**

574 The past experiences concerning the management of volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area reveal the
575 complexity of devising a collaboration around the active volcanoes of Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei
576 caldera and Ischia Island to reduce the risk in such densely inhabited areas. The history of volcanic
577 risk in this area demonstrates the tendency to not consider, or to underestimate, the risk (which
578 otherwise is a human attitude). Nonetheless, we cannot reduce the problem of the high volcanic risk
579 of the Neapolitan area to this latter consideration only. The present development of the urbanised
580 areas around the volcanoes of Naples is the result of a very long history and stratification of different
581 cultures and populations that settled the Neapolitan area and its surroundings as a scenic and useful
582 place to live, since the Bronze Age. This history left a huge cultural heritage in its wake but also a

583 demanding socio-economic condition, especially around Vesuvius. Thus, as also highlighted by
584 Galliard (2008), in many cases the historical and cultural heritage and political economy remain of
585 much greater importance and may override the choice of people in the face of volcanic hazards. This
586 fact emphasises the importance of understanding the complex contexts of the Neapolitan area in
587 proposing policies to reduce volcanic risk. It appears evident, for instance, that the choice of people
588 not to relocate themselves outside the red zone of Vesuvius and to remain in their native towns,
589 despite the perceived threats, has little to do with volcanic activity. This point, already discussed by
590 Galliard (2008), suggests that, in such a complex social context, the policies for volcanic risk
591 mitigation need to go far beyond only prevention of relatively rare events. A different and more
592 general approach is thus required, and rational access and the use of resources to adapt the social and
593 economic development of the area to its natural vocation should be aimed at. This is a long-term
594 objective conflicting with the short-sighted policies adopted by the Campania Region and the Central
595 Government. Consequently, the proposals to re-convert the riskiest areas of Neapolitan volcanoes
596 into lower-risk zones using a different (and long-term) paradigm of development (e.g. Dobran, 2006,
597 2007) are struggling to take off. Simultaneously, the proposed economic incentives (*Vesuvia* project)
598 to relocate people from the red zone (at Vesuvius) towards safer areas was a failure as well.
599 Accordingly, these failures first have to do with a wrong territorial policy, and secondly with the
600 volcanology.

601 Furthermore, at least during the last 25 years, the policies for the reduction of volcanic risk in the
602 Neapolitan area have been disconnected from their natural, social and politico-economic context.
603 This is possibly the result of a not so holistic approach to the problem of volcanic risk reduction
604 which, particularly in this area, is unavoidable and, on the contrary, requires an openly discussed
605 method between academics of all disciplines, policymakers and stakeholders (Donovan, 2019). The
606 most recent history of Neapolitan volcanoes is also interesting for disaster development trajectories
607 in other countries. Actually, the mistakes – particularly those of not linking risk with development
608 practice – are being repeated all over the world in hazard-prone areas. This fact highlights the
609 importance of risk-sensitive development practices, that incorporate scientific advice, urban planning,
610 social study and so on (Barclay et al., 2008; Donovan and Oppenheimer, 2014).

611 Finally, after about 40 years of debates around the volcanic risk in the Neapolitan area, an analysis
612 of the reasons why the strategies aimed to reduce the risk in this area systematically failed is required.
613 This step is necessary to propose more reliable solutions for the risk reduction in a very large and
614 urbanised territory such as that of Neapolitan volcanoes. A further effort is also required by
615 Neapolitan scientists to connect the territorial governance structures and local (at risk) communities

616 to the scientific network. In this framework, scientists must pay further attention to avoid
617 politicisation of volcanology when advising the authorities (Donovan, 2019).

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623

624 **Figure captions**

625 Fig.1. The Neapolitan volcanic area with the three active volcanoes, Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei caldera
626 and the Island of Ischia. The limits of the red zones of the evacuation plans for Vesuvius and Campi
627 Flegrei caldera are reported, respectively (from www.protezionecivile.gov). About 1,000,000 of
628 people are living in both the red zones. A plan for the island of Ischia is currently in progress (base
629 map is from Google Earth). The box below shows the inhabitants density map of the Neapolitan area
630 (from regione.campania.it)

631 Fig. 2. A timeline of volcanic activity history at Vesuvius, Campi Flegrei and Ischia Island. The most
632 important eruptions are reported. Red and blue color indicates increasing and decreasing of volcanic
633 activity, respectively (after Piochi et al., 2005).

634 Fig. 3. The city of Naples with the location of the eruptive vents associated with different eruptive
635 periods. The dotted line represents the eastern boundary of the caldera of Campi Flegrei (modified
636 after Scarpati et al., 2013 and Carlino, 2019; base map is from Google Earth).

637 Fig. 4. A qualitative sketch describing the possible state of a volcano approaching an eruption and its
638 forecast reliability. For a quiescent volcano the reawakening is generally associated with the onset of
639 seismic activity indicating the variation of stress field within the volcano. The latter is generally due
640 to circulation of pressurized fluids in the crust and, eventually, to magma migration at shallow level.
641 This dynamic is accompanied by others precursors (ground deformations and variation of fluids
642 emission) which make the forecast more reliable as the eruption is approached. The point at which
643 the volcano overcomes the critical state, is the moment ($t?$) in which the physical processes occurring
644 within the volcano are irreversible, that is to say the volcano will erupt. Volcanologists cannot predict

645 the time (t) because the processes are chaotic and the forecast has a probabilistic nature (after,
646 Carlino, 2019).

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664 **Figures**

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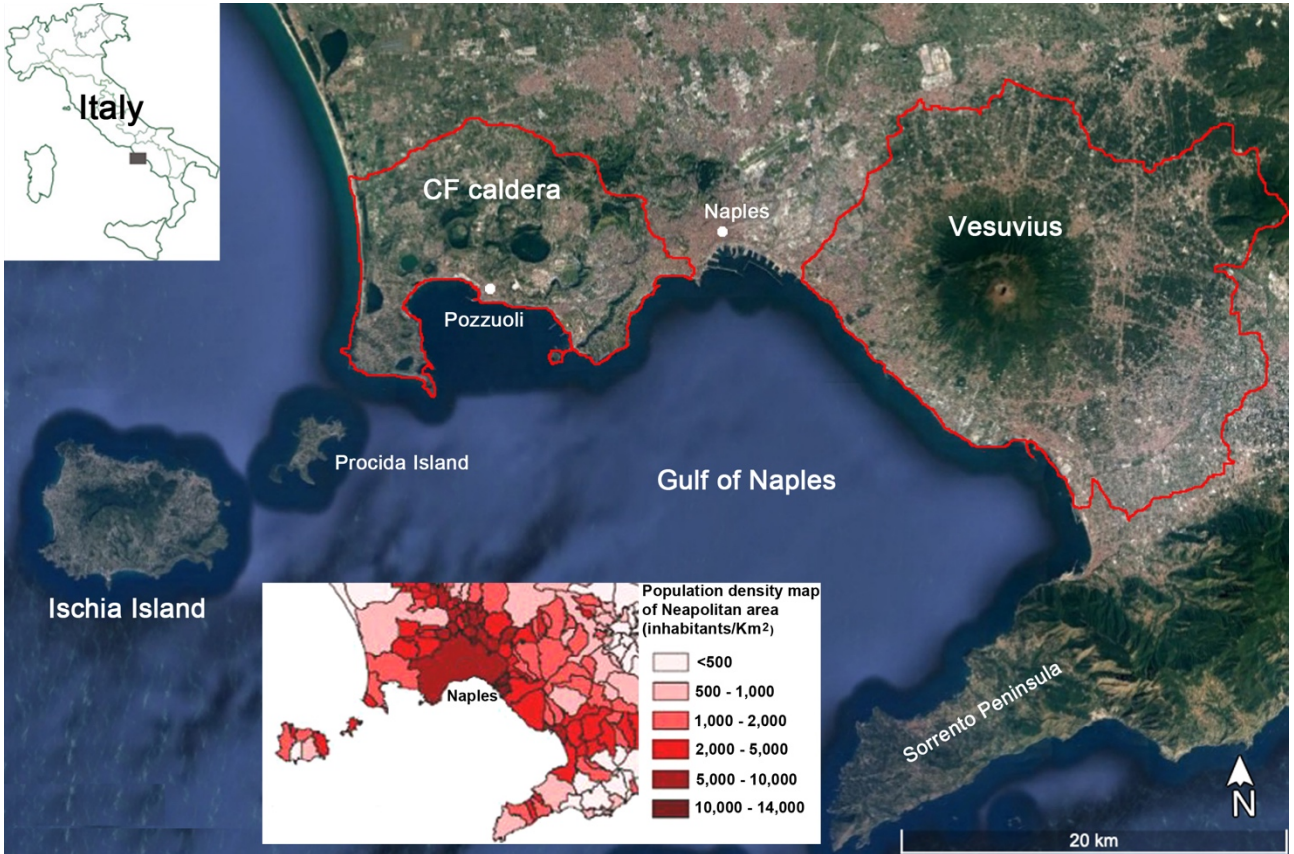
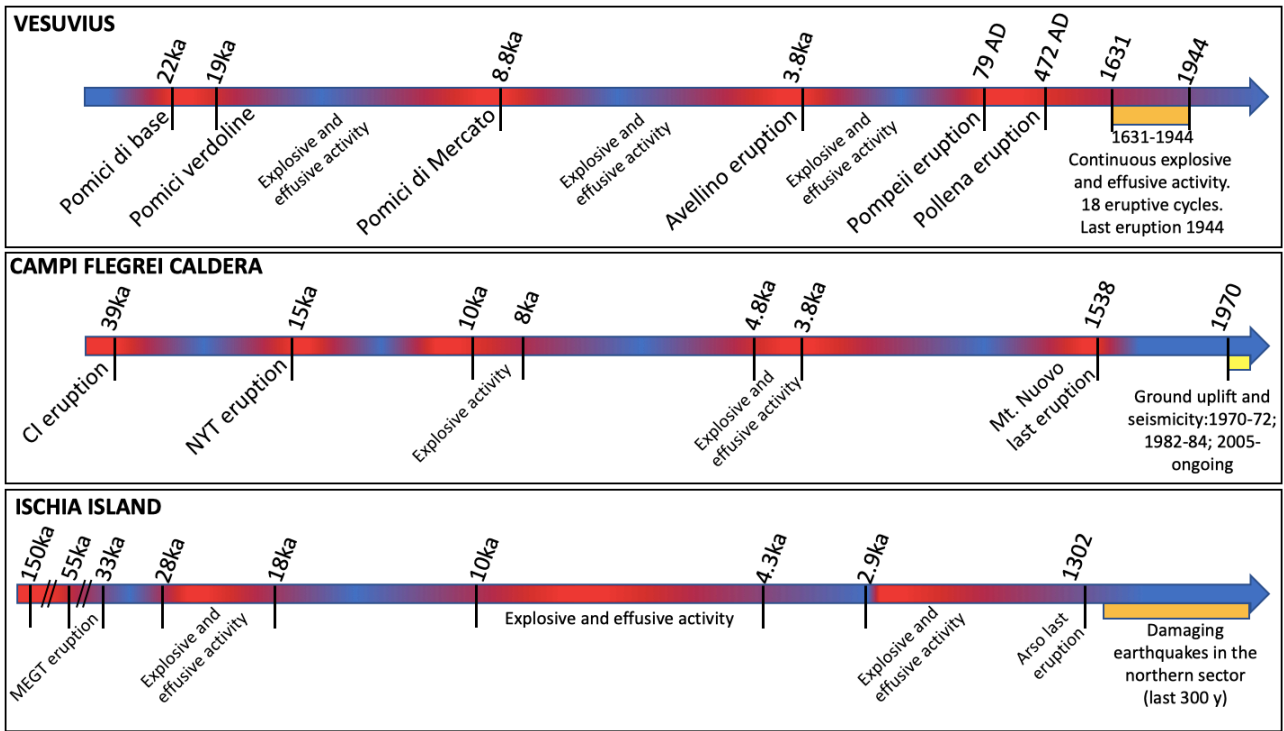


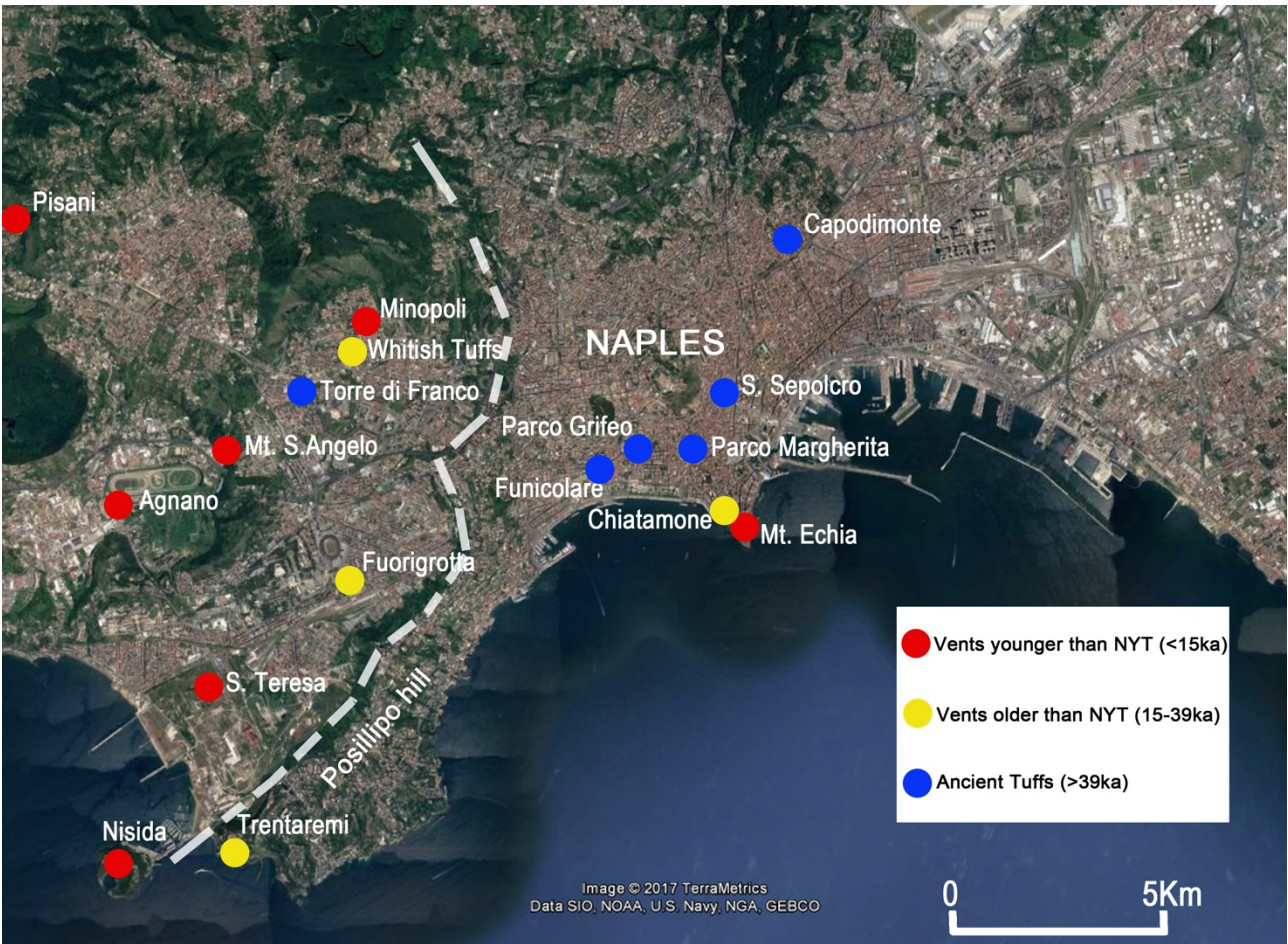
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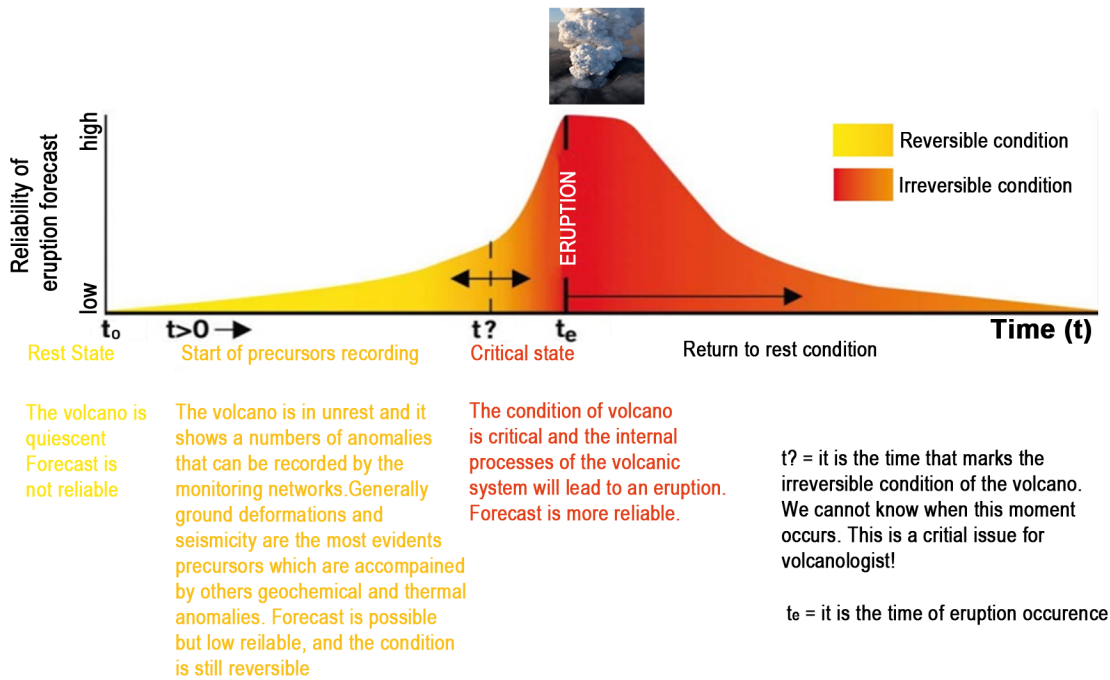
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