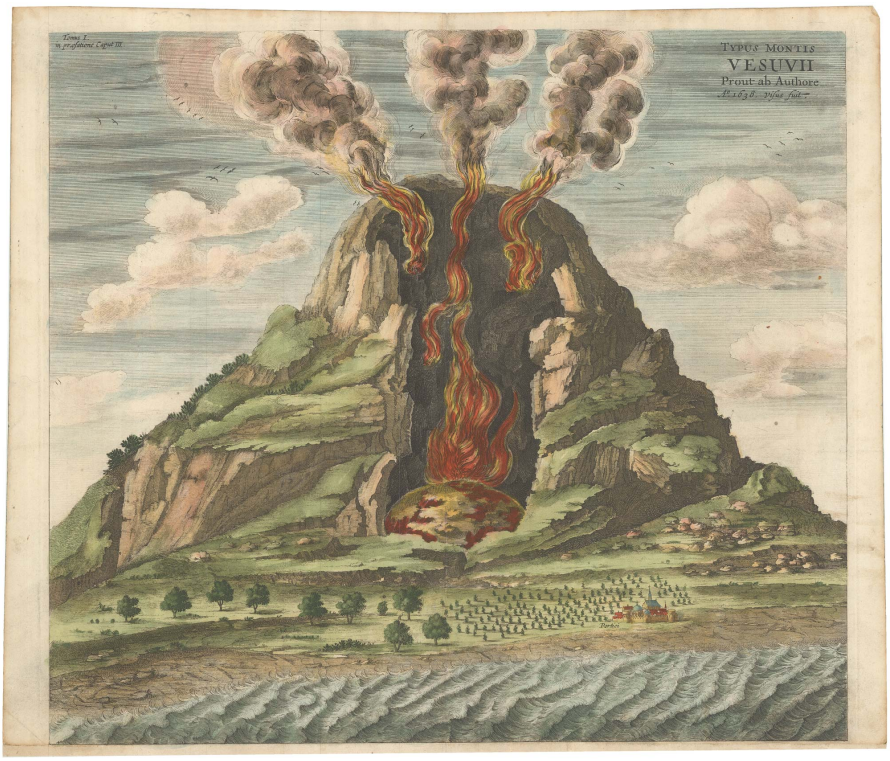
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An early scientific illustration of the volcano Vesuvius

KIRCHER, Athanasius.
Typus Montis Vesuvii Prout ab Authore A°. 1638 Visus fuit.

Amsterdam, Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, 1682. Coloured, 360 x 410mm.

£800

A dramatic representation of the active volcano Vesuvius seen from the sea, with part of the slope removed to illustrate the magma chamber. Between volcano and sea is Portici, a village that was destroyed in the 1631 eruption but rebuilt. Seven years later Athanasius Kircher visited the area and had himself lowered into the crater to study it before drawing this scene. It was then published in his book 'Mundus subterraneus, quo universae denique naturae divitiae'. Athanasius Kircher (1602-80), a German Jesuit, was a true polymath: he wrote on theology, Sinology, Egyptology, medicine, law, and mechanics. His 'Mundus Subterraneus' of 1664 theorised that subterranean passages linked both the world's volcanos and bodies of water, causing the tides.

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