

VI. *An Extract of the Account mentioned in the foregoing Letter, taken out of an Italian Paper. Written by P. Alessandro Burgos. Printed first at Palermo, and afterwards at Naples. 1693.*

HOW difficult is the Task to describe in a few Pages the mournful *Iliads* of the once famous Kingdom of *Sicilia*, in great part ruined by the terrible Shakes of the late Earthquake? How shall I, amongst the Confusion of Tears, Sighs and Groans, discover the History of our Misery? Or amongst a Chaos of Rubbish find the Marks of our Desolation? Nay, how can I recall to mind, without Amazement, the Relations that came from all parts of the Desolate Land? Yet your Commands are to be obey'd.

*Quaquam animus meminisse horret luctuque refugit  
Incipiam-----*

The Island of *Sicilia* of 700 Miles Circuit, and divided into three Valleys, began on *Friday* the 9<sup>th</sup> of *Jan.* about half an hour past Four a Clock, to be sensible of the Shake in the Valley of *Mazara*: But in the two other Valleys of *Emone* and *Noto*, the Shakes were so terrible, as to throw down some Buildings, obliging the Inhabitants to seek Refuge either in the Fields, or with Prayers and Tears implore the Divine Pity in the Churches. On *Sunday* following, being the 11<sup>th</sup> of the same Month, at twenty hours and three quarters, the Hand of God appeared much more terrible, awakening the most Lethargick Sinner. The Shakes of this Earthquake

quake did no Damage in the Valley of *Mazara*, only frightening the People.

*Palermo* received some Detriment in most of the Buildings, especially the Palace and Hospital of *St. Bartholomews*. The Steeple of *St. Nicholas*, belonging to the *Augustines*, was ruined, and some hurt done to the Church; but little Mischiefe else done, and no body hurt.

In *Messina* all the Buildings of the Theatre are shattered, the Royal and Archbishop's Palace, with the Seminary, are all crack'd. The vast and stately Church of the *Franciscans* broken in many places, and the Roof of the Vestry fallen: The Steeple of the Church of the Annunciation thrown down, with the Death of the Sexton. The top of the Spire of the *Dome* cleft, all the other Religious Houses and Publick Buildings were saved. Many private Buildings were thrown down, and all the rest shored up. There were but few Persons kill'd.

*Troina*, *Randazzo*, *Nicosia*, Cities in the Mountains, suffered in their Buildings. The first had half of the Mother-Church destroyed, with the Parish Church of *St. Lucy*, and was much damaged in his Monasteries; one whereof is not habitable. The last had its *Dome* very much hurt. *Castiglione* had the Castle and many Houses thrown down. In *Francavilla* and *Linguagrossa*, the greater part of the Buildings and some Churches. *Mascali* quite ruined, but not many killed, most of the People being abroad a Procession with the Reliques of *St. Leonard* their Protector.

*Aidone* received a considerable Mischiefe, two whole Quarters, with many of its Inhabitants being destroyed. In the Quarter of *St. Laurence* there is not one House standing, and the Churches ruined. In that of *St. James* the Church of the *Annunciation* and its Oratory thrown down, with several other Sacred Edifices. In the other part of the City which stands lower, there were not so many Houses nor Persons lost, yet the Church of

Pope

Pope Leo is quite flat, and the magnificent Church of the *Dominicans* in Ruines, with the Convent of the *Reformati Osservanti*, one of the best in the whole Province.

*Abi Aquilea*, commonly called *Jaci Reale*, situated at the Foot of *Etna* is almost quite destroyed, and its Inhabitants buried in the Ruines, with many Convents; amongst the rest, the famous one of the *Osservanti Reformati*. *Aci St. Antonio*, *Aci St. Filippo*, *S. Gregorio*, *Pedara Trecastagni*, *Bonnacorei*, *Nicolosi*, *Motta*, *Mestri-bianco*, *Fenicia*, and several other fruitful Villages situated near *Mongibello*, are destroyed, with all the Habitations of the pleasant Hills about *Cananea*, which are now in the Dust.

*Paterno*, about Twelve Miles from *Catania*, a populous City at the foot of *Mongibello*, subject to the Dutchy of *Montalto*, felt the dreadful Effects of the Earthquake, loosing most of its Buildings, all the Convents of Fryars, and a very fine Monastery. In the Ruines were buried Forty Persons. *Aderno*, a City subject to the same Lords, had the same Fate.

*Cantabiano Piemonte* in the Valley of *Emona*, *Francofonte*, *Palagonia* in the Valley of *Nato* are little less than wholly level'd, and about 300 Persons destroyed, as we have by the Letter of the Marquess of *Francofonte*, who was miraculously saved by leaping out through the Crack in the Wall of the Falling Edifice.

*Catania*, one of the most ancient and famous Cities of the whole Kingdom, honoured by the Courts of several Monarchs, and an Episcopal See, even from the time of the Apostles, giving place to none in the Beauty of its Sacred Edifices; amongst which the *Dome* was the most sumptuous and large in all *Sicily*, adorned with excellent Pictures, and richly furnished, and bless'd with the Reliques of the Invincible Martyr *St. Agatha*, honoured with the Bodies of several Kings; besides it had a very high

high and curiously built Steeple. Here were a great many Nunneries; amongst the rest, the Monastery of the Trinity; and that of *St. Benedict*, with that Prodigy of Workmanship the magnificent Monastery of *St. Nicholas*, with its Temple, a place famous for several Reliques. Next the Jesuits Colledge, the Convent of the *Minorites*, and two of the *Dominicans*, the beautiful one of *Capuchins*, the Imperial Convent of the *Carmelites*, that of the Reformed *Minorites*, that of the Reformed *Augustines*, with several other Frieries, with an infinite number of Ancient and Modern Churches, Colleges, and other Publick Buildings, inhabited by about 23000 Souls, its Nobility many and ancient. Learning was here in its Glory; the Citizens were themselves Learned, and Lovers of Knowledge, assisted with the many Priviledges granted by the King. The University, where the Learned Laurel was conter'd on the worthy, made this place the *Sicilian Athens*. This once so famous, now unhappy *Catania*, had the greatest share in this Tragedy. Father *Antonio Serrovita*, who was to preach at *Catania* the Lent following, was on his way thither on the 11th, at 20 hours and  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and at the distance of a few Miles; he observed a black Cloud like Night hovering over the City; that there arose from the Mouth of *Montgibello* great Spires of Flame, which spread themselves all round, that the Sea all of a suddain began to roar, and raise it self in swelling Billows, that there was a very great and dreadful Blow, as if all the Artillery in the World had been at once discharged; that the Birds flew about astonish'd in the Air; that the Beasts and Cattle in the Fields ran crying about affrighted; that his and his Companions Horses were so startled, that they stood stock still, trembling so as they were forced to alight, which they had no sooner done, but they were lifted from the Ground above two Palms; and casting his Eyes toward *Catania*, he with Amazement saw no-

thing but a very thick Cloud of Dust in the Air. This was the Scene of their Calamity. For of the magnificent *Catania* there is not the least Foot-step to be seen. All its Edifices are levell'd with the Ground, except the Chappel of St. *Agatha*, the *Rotunda*, the Castle of *Ursino*, the Walls that encompass'd it, and a few mean Houses. There was a very great Destruction of the Inhabitants buried in the Ruines of the Bishop's Palace; the Steeple and *Dome*, where most of the City, frightened with *Friday's* Earthquake, were got together to carry the Reliques of St. *Agatha* in Procession. Many of the Nobility were saved under the Chappel of the Saint, and some of the Clergy. The number of the Dead was about 15000; for though the People had staid in the Fields all the *Saturday*, yet the Solemnity obliged them to be in the City on the *Sunday* to pay their Devotions, at the Procession. Of the *Benedictines* about 25 were killed in the Quire, of the *Jesuits* 21, of the *Conventuals* 11, the number of the *Dominicans* is not known; the *Carmelites* were all buried except one as they went in Procession; and so were the greater part of the other Religious Orders, and of the Nuns few were saved. This was the Tragedy of *Catania*, which was accompanied with dreadful Lightnings and Thunder from Heaven, with Deluges of Rain; and in the Ruines were heard nothing but Cries, Schrieches and dying Groans. On the Heaps of Stones we may now write, *Here was Catania*.

*Lentini*, a very ancient City, honoured with the Births of many Illustrious Persons; amongst the rest, that Father of Eloquence, *Georgio Leontino*, of a long time an Episcopal See, &c. felt that Shock on the 9th with such Violence, as threw down and ruined the greater part of its Buildings; amongst which was the ancient Convent of *Minorites*, famous for being the Dwelling-place of St. *Anthony* of *Padua*; the *Royal Convent*, so called from the

the Tomb of one of our Queens buried there, under the Ruines of which 4 Religious were buried, the rest escaped miraculously. But the last Earthquake on the 11th laid in the Dust the remainder of the City, with the Death of about 4000 People that returned thither after the first Shake to take care of their Goods. So that there is now but the Carcase of a City all shatter'd to pieces, not one House left standing.

*Carlentine*, a Modern City, being as a Citadel dependent on *Lentine*, had the same Fate. The beautiful Castle of *Licodia* all ruined, with the Marchioness of *Martini* and all her Children buried therein.

*Bizzini*, a City of rich Inhabitants, is level'd with the Ground, with the Death of many People; part by the first, and the rest by the last day's Earthquake.

*Sortino* and *Cassero* are quite demolish'd; in the first about 3000 perish'd, and in the other a very great number.

*Agosta*, a Trading Town, built on an Island in a large Bay, which makes a capacious Port, was all blown up into the Air; for besides the Damage of the Earthquake, there was a great quantity of Powder in the Castle that took Fire, and killed several of the Citizens that had escaped into the Fields with the Stones of the Buildings: Here perish'd about 3000. The enraged Sea grew terribly boisterous, and tempestuously beat against the Walls of the *Dominican* Convent with such Fury, that some Galleys belonging to the Knights of *Malta* scarcely escaped Shipwrack in the Port. In fine, *Luctus ubique pavor, & plurima mortis imago.* The Country of *Mililli* in the Dutchy of *Montalto*, felt the same Fate, with the Destruction of the Inhabitants.

*Syracusa*, famous in old time, an Episcopal See; in our time like the Phœnix arising from the Ashes, standing upon a Peninsula, by Art made an Island, having a Bridge to the main Land; strengthened with a Modern

Fortification, sufficiently populous by reason of its convenient Situation for Trade, full of Nobility, and beautify'd with Churches, Convents, Monasteries and Palaces, now mourns in Ruines. It was sensible of *Friday's*, but all shock to pieces by the *Sunday's* Earthquake, with the loss of many Thousand Persons. Most of the Nobility saved themselves by a timely Flight. Of the Religious not many perish'd. Scarce a Village in the whole Diocess is left: Confusion reigns every where; and the Misery is encreas'd by the want of Food, caus'd by the Granaries and Mills being destroyed.

*Laserla*, *Palazzuolo* and *Busceni* lie in Ruines, with many Inhabitants destroyed.

*Spacaforno*, a populous place, situated near the Sea, which washes the Foot of the Promontory *Pachino*, has lost all its Buildings: Here they reckon about 2000 dead.

*Giarratana* with its Fall killed most of the Inhabitants. The Marquess himself with his Wife and Three Children escaping on *Friday*, were on *Sunday* buried in the Ruines; the Marquess and his Children were taken out alive to bewail the loss of his Lady.

*Melitello* in the Valley of *Noto* is shaken to pieces, the Churches and chief Buildings even with the ground, and the Religious Orders all turned out in the open Air, or under Huts and Cabines.

*Occhiula* escaped not the common Calamity.

*Mineo*, an ancient City, is now no more; and the greater part of the Citizens and Religious.

*Caltagirone*, a City conspicuous for its Senate and Nobility, suffered in this universal Calamity the total Ruine of its proud Edifices: As the principal Church with its very high Steeple or Spire, the Famous Colledge of *St. Julian*, the Temple of *St. George*, the Parish-Church of *St. James*, admired for the Pictures of *Epiphanius*, the Chappel only remaining, with the Image and Reliques of the

the Saint. The Temple of the *Conventuals* thrown down, the famous Bridge that joyns the Convent to the Town shattered to pieces, and the Dormitories not to be inhabited ; the famous Convent of *St. Bonaventure*, the fall of whose Temple and Spire was the Destruction of the lower Buildings ; the Colledge of the Jesuits, and the Steeple of that Noble Church are quite ruined. The *Carmelites*, *Dominicans*, *Augustines*, *Crouched Friars*, &c. are all without Churches and Convents. The Monasteries of *St. Gregory*, *St. Chiara*, *St. Salvator* and *St. Stephen*, with a Conservatory of Orphans, are all shook down. In fine, the Senate-House, adorned with most curious Statues, and all the other Buildings, are either fallen, or threaten a sudden Ruine in these Desolations. About 1000 People were lost.

*Modica*, a populous place, and chief of the Seigniory of the Admiral of *Castile*, has its Buildings and Famous Castle laid in the Dust. Seignior *Abbot Frederick* the Procurator General saved himself in the Colledge of the Jesuits, from whom we have the Account ; and that the Cities of *Ragusa*, *Scicli*, and *Chiaramonte* had the same Misfortune.

*Comiso* suffered much in its Buildings, though but few were killed. The Convent is down, but the Church stands.

*Noto*, an ancient and ingenious City, full of Nobility and fine Buildings, Convents and Monasteries, as we hear by a Courier from thence, is all ruin'd ; the Convents of the *Dominicans*, *Conventuals*, *Reformati*, *Carmelites*, and *Capuchins*, which was indeed a wondrous Fabrick, are all torn to pieces. The Church of the Crucifixion, the *Dome*, and all the Nunneries are down, with the Deaths of many Citizens and Nobles.



To conclude, there is not a Corner in all the Valley of *Noto* that is not ruined wholly, or for the most part, with a dreadful Slaughter of the People. The Southern Coasts, as *Licati*, *Terra Nova* and *Gircuti* have suffered Damage in their Buildings. And all the Castles of the Valley of *Emone* near *Mongibello* are crack'd and broken, or fallen down.

This is the Tragedy of *Sicilia*. His Excellency Seignior *Vicere* has given prudent and necessary Orders from *Palermo* for the Relief of the afflicted and miserable Remains of an amazed and half-dead People.

---

VIII. *An Extract of a Letter from Mr. Anth. Van. Leeuwenhoek, containing several Observations on the Texture of the Bones of Animals compared with that of Wood : On the Bark of Trees : On the little Scales found on the Cuticula, &c.*

**I** Some years since writ Mr. *Oldenburgh*, That I conceived the Bone to be constituted of Globules ; but finding my Mistake, I retracted that Opinion : For what I then took for Globules, was the tops of the Tubes or Cylinders whereof the Bone is composed.

Not satisfied with my Observations thereon, I continued my Endeavours to discover the true Texture of Bones ; and at length found plainly in the Thigh Bone of an Ox, that it consisted of four sorts or sizes of Tubes, whereof some are so very small and close united, as not easily to be discerned in a Bone cut a-cross, though  
with