



Mount Etna, heart of the Mediterranean, in science, narrative, and images

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A keen urge, enticing and potent at the same time, as only real passion can be, had taken hold of our hearts. It was thanks to Etna that we met. It had helped bring together communication, photography and volcanology into one single project, namely to share our emotions and those of the volcano and pass them on to whoever might believe in similar values. Two men and one woman, two Sicilians and one German, on the slopes of the mountain. Chance is the grand master of science, events, coincidences, facts and illusions which come to a crossroads where the spirit may feel at liberty. So here we are then, to tell you of the pulsating heart of a body in constant evolution, about half a million years old, to tell of the red “blood” feeding it, its destructive power, its growth and its dimensions changing in time: all evidence that our planet is very much alive. Because Etna volcano, locally called “Mungibeddu” or “a Muntagna”, embodies the vital force of the Earth, to which we owe our existence. We have sought to combine science, narrative and images to meet the tastes of our cultured compatriots, those living beyond the Alps as well as those from overseas. Rightly so, because Etna belongs to humanity, and we have the privilege of dwelling in its arms. We also have the duty and the pleasure to share its existence with the few who may not know it, with the many who would like to understand its unusual aspects in greater depth and with those who walk its paths and explore its precipices perhaps to find their inner selves. The volcano shares the fears of the farm workers and of the inhabitants; it diffuses the intoxicating scent of the earth, air, water and wind. It feeds on the melancholic lullabies of those who have lost a loved one, those who have challenged the laws of nature. And always, at each moment, it is close to us, even as far as the sea of salty air and tears that mothers sometimes weep.