Marta Pszczolińska, "Entry on: Bolek and Lolek in Europe [Bolek i Lolek w Europie] (Series, S01E05): Under the Crater [Pod kraterem] by Romuald Kłys", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1252. Entry version as of July 12, 2026.

Romuald Kłys

Bolek and Lolek in Europe [Bolek i Lolek w Europie] (Series, S01E05): Under the Crater [Pod kraterem]

Poland (1986)

TAGS: Vesuvius Vulcan

Frame from the animation. Courtesy of Studio Filmów Rysunkowych.

General information	
Title of the work	Bolek and Lolek in Europe [Bolek i Lolek w Europie] (Series, S01E05): Under the Crater [Pod kraterem]
Studio/Production Company	SFR (Studio Filmów Rysunkowych)
Country of the First Edition	Poland
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	Polish
First Edition Date	1986
First Edition Details	*Pod kraterem. Bolek i Lolek w Europie* (Series, S01E05). Directed by Romuald Kłys. Studio Filmów Rysunkowych, 1986, 9 min. 27 sec.
Running time	9 min 27 sec
Format	TV, 4:3
Date of the First DVD or VHS	13.10.2016 (DVD, Best Film)
Official Website	sfr.com.pl (accessed: July 2, 2021)
Available Onllne	dailymotion.com (accessed: July 2, 2021)
Genre	Animated films, Cartoons, Television series
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl

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Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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Creators

Romuald Kłys , 1937 - 1997
(Director)

Romuald Kłys (1937–1997) was a Polish director and screenwriter of animated films since 1954 connected with SFR – Studio Filmów Rysunkowych in Bielsko-Biała, known in communist Poland as the Polish Disneyland. He directed and/or animated many episodes of the most popular bedtime films and series with children's favourite characters, such as the dog Reksio, Bolek and Lolek or the Wawel Dragon. He was awarded a prize by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: for propagating Polish culture abroad (for *Przygody Bolka i Lolka*), and twice honoured by the Międzynarodowy Festiwal Filmów Młodego Widza „Ale Kino!" (International Festival of Young Viewers' Films), in 1977 and 2017.

Sources:

filmpolski.pl (accessed: July 2, 2021).

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Bio prepared by Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl

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Additional information

Casting	Voice actors: Ilona Kuśmierska – Bolek, Danuta Przesmycka – Lolek.
Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	The series *Bolek i Lolek w Europie* [Bolek and Lolek in Europe]* contains 5 episodes produced between 1983–1986: 01. *Duch Zamku Lorda MacIntosha* [The Ghost of the Lord MacIntosh's Castle]. 02. *W Królestwie Posejdona* [In Poseidon's Kingdom]. 03. *W Hiszpanii* [In Spain]. 04. *Wyścig Renów* [The Reindeers' Race]. 05. *Pod Kraterem* [Under the Crater]. * Bolek and Lolek were known in English versions of the series also as Bennie and Lennie, Jym and Jam or Tim and Tom.
Summary	At the beginning of each episode of the series, Bolek and Lolek study a wall map. This time they decide to travel to Campania, Italy. Bolek wants to see Vesuvius before it becomes inactive as he reads it is the last active volcano on the European continent; Lolek, however, is focused on Italy as the homeland of ice-cream. They travel by car (registered "B & L"), unaccompanied by any adult. On the border, they have to give their autographs to passport control officer instead of their passports. They arrive at a camping site in Solfatara in Campi Flegrei where they can experience what a fumarole field is. Lolek again is interested rather in visiting Naples and tasting some ice-cream, but Bolek makes them go to Vesuvius. Accidentally, both boys slip and plunge into a rift which goes down under the mountain. In a

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mysterious cave, the boys see vats of unknown substances simmering over fires, Suddenly, from the fireplace emerges Vulcan, a large but friendly man. He introduces himself and assures the boys that in his house, there is nothing to be afraid of. He explains to the children that this is his volcanic kitchen, where he boils asphalt, grows magma "dough", and keeps special "raisins" made of diamonds. He also reassures Lolek that the fumes the boy is afraid of mean that Vesuvius is alive and healthy. Eventually, he takes the boys by the hands and leads them outside. Finally, Bolek and Lolek relax in a small Naples café tasting traditional ice-cream, while above Mt Vesuvius, appear words written in smoke: *ciao bambini* – a greeting from the god.

Analysis

The *Bolek i Lolek* series has been very popular in Poland since 1962. In total, over 150 episodes were produced and the characters are still highly recognizable in Poland and abroad. This short animation is part of the series *Bolek i Lolek w Europie* [B&L in Europe] which presents in a nutshell selected European countries. According to the cartoon style, images are simplified and stereotyped, to emphasize location, they include “typical” Neapolitan music. A Mediterranean landscape and background are presented without providing details, which lets the viewer focus on the main narration. In this case, Naples is shown as a small, average Mediterranean city, and the attention centers on Mt Vesuvius, where the action takes place.

Here, in contrast to the episode where the boys travel to Greece, the only reference to antiquity and mythological characters is a two-minute long scene in which the protagonists are Vulcan’s guests (5:50–8:10). The meeting with him happens in a cave under the mountain. The cave resembles a bizarre kitchen rather than a forge, but still a fitting place for the god of fire. Vulcan himself is presented as a cook* endowed with characteristic elements indicating his powers. His hair and beard are orange, the same colour as the fire burning in the background, as if he were a transformation of the fireball. As he lives in extreme heat he is barely dressed, but his profession is obvious: he is wearing the protective leather apron of a blacksmith. The god is a massively built, gigantic young man, cheerful and surprisingly friendly and polite. He is also modest – it is Bolek, and not the god himself, who informs Lolek that their host is the god of fire and volcanoes. Vulcan only confirms that, and while he is talking, flames surround his head like a halo confirming his

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connection with fire. The blacksmith's hammer, Vulcan's most recognizable ancient attribute is not in evidence. His friendly behaviour makes him ordinary and less distant: he acts towards the children like a kind, patient and caring uncle.

Even without seeing the god's amazing craft in action, the child viewer obtains basic information about his divine element and role. The god, as the only character the boys encounter in the episode, takes on a special importance.

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* See: Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* VI 24,2: *Tunc poculum nectaris, quod vinum deorum est, Iovi quidem suus pocillator, ille rusticus puer, ceteris vero Liber ministrabat,* ***Vulcanus cenam coquebat****…*

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Vesuvius Vulcan
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Boys Child, children Environment Journeys Nature Siblings Transformation Travel

Further Reading

Kamusella, Tomasz, "Crocodile Skin, or the Fraternal Curtain", *The Antioch Review* 4 (2012): 742–759 (accessed: July 2, 2021).

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Sitkiewicz, Paweł, "Tylko dla dzieci: krótka historia filmów o Bolku i

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Lolku", *Panoptikum* 10 (2011): 137–148, bazhum.muzhp.pl (accessed: July 2, 2021).

Addenda

Production Team:

Director: Romuald Kłys,

Screenplay, Dialogues: Adam Hajduk, Andrzej Orzechowski,

Characters designed by: Tadeusz Depa, Stanisław Dülz, Alfred Ledwig, Leszek Lorek, Rufin Struzik,

Animation: Elżbieta Burek, Jadwiga Byrska, Aleksandra Dybczak, Urszula Fraś, Krystyna Lasoń, Marian Wantoła,

Music: Waldemar Kazanecki,

Sound: Otokar Balcy,

Montage: Alojzy Mol.

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