

U. Mróz

CONTRIBUTION OF JOHANN GOTTFRIED BORLACH TO DEVELOPMENT OF
MINING AND SALT EVAPORATION IN THE AREA OF SAXONY AND
MAŁOPOLSKA

Abstract

Johann Gottfried Borlach (born in 1687 in Dresden and deceased in 1768 in Kösen) is an outstanding person in various aspects and one of the most important people who operated in the area of the Cracow Saltworks in the modern era. Undeniably, Borlach contributed to raising the largest saltworks in the contemporary Republic of Poland from ruin. Borlach, initially hired as a surveyor, later held the prestigious function of the administrator of Cracow Saltworks. He introduced numerous innovations which greatly improved the functioning of the mine and, in particular, safety in the mine. The largest and the most significant projects of the Saxon engineer include work focusing on securing post-mining voids, introduction – on a large scale – of a comprehensive plan of dewatering the underground pits, improvement of transport of the extracted salt and ventilation of underground pits. It is also necessary to emphasise his contribution in the area of measurements; the best example in this respect is a set of maps of the Wieliczka mine and the city of Wieliczka. Another area of his activity was issuance of legal regulations for the functioning of the enterprise, including relations among individual employees.

The second important part of the article is analysis of his accomplishments in the area of Saxony, i.e. his home country. This aspect is quite significant due to the fact that Polish-language publications stored in the Library and in the Archives of the Cracow Saltworks Museum Wieliczka do not devote too much attention to foreign activities of Borlach, focusing most often on listing three most important Saxon saltworks, without taking into account the important changes that he introduced in them, as well as mutual Polish and Saxon influences in this respect.

To date, little has been written about the private life of the Saxon engineer, members of his closest family, early years, stages of education, ties with scientific circles, private interests and accomplishments before the period when he was appointed to the position of a surveyor in the Cracow Saltworks.

This work takes into account all information in a degree permitted by the preserved and available historical records.