

Michała Jana Borch rozprawa o truflach piemonckich

Michał Jan Borch (1753–1811) and his work on truffles of Piemont

SUMMARY

This paper presents and discusses the Polish translation of the work of a Polish scientist of the 18th century, Michał Borch entitled “On the truffles of Piedmont”. Borch was born to an old noble Polish family, which had been living in a Polish part of Livonia (at present the territory of Latvia). Science was Borch’s passion. His main interests were connected with mineralogy and chemistry. He is known as the author of the following scientific books written in French:

- *Lithographie Sicillienne, ou Catalogue raisonne’ de toutes pierres de la Sicile (1777)*,
- *Lithologie Sicillienne, ou Connaissance de Pierres de la Sicile (1778)*,
- *Mineralogie Sicilienne, Docimastique et Metallurgique (1780)*.

He also described his travels to Sicily and Malta in a book: *Lettres sur Sicile et sur l’Isle de Malthe (1782)*. In this book, a number of his observations on different features concerning the mineralogy and botany of these islands are presented.

The book on the truffles of Piedmont was published by Borch in 1780 (*Lettres sur les Truffes de Piemont*). In the book, he described in a very precise way the morphology of truffles, identified their spores, and elaborated on the conditions for artificial cultivation of truffles. At that time, the idea of generatio spontanea of truffles was generally accepted. To this view, the results of Borch must have been considered as very new, progressive and original.

The book of Borch could be considered as an important contribution to the natural history of that time. In the Polish libraries, Borch’s book was not preserved. It is also completely missing from the Polish literature on the history of sciences. Therefore, the publication of the translation of Borch’s work seems to be necessary.