

Bytom Odrzański, Nowa Sól County, Lubuskie Province, Poland

Based on:

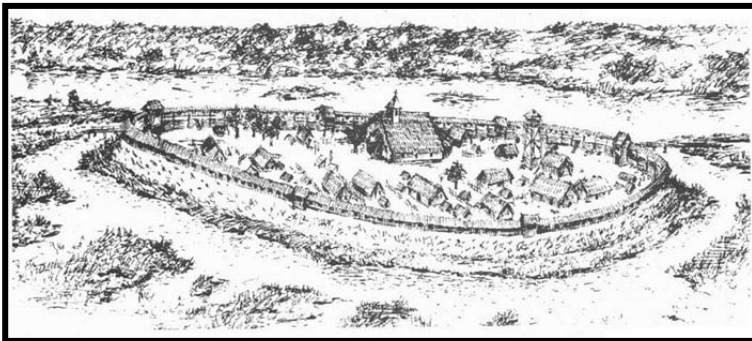
Miejscowości Powiatu Nowosolskiego – Localities of the County of Nowa Sól
Muzeum Miejskie w Nowej Soli – City Museum of Nowa Sól

Author – Tomasz Andrzejewski

Translated from Polish by Edward F. Rozyłowicz



Location of Bytom Odrzański
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>



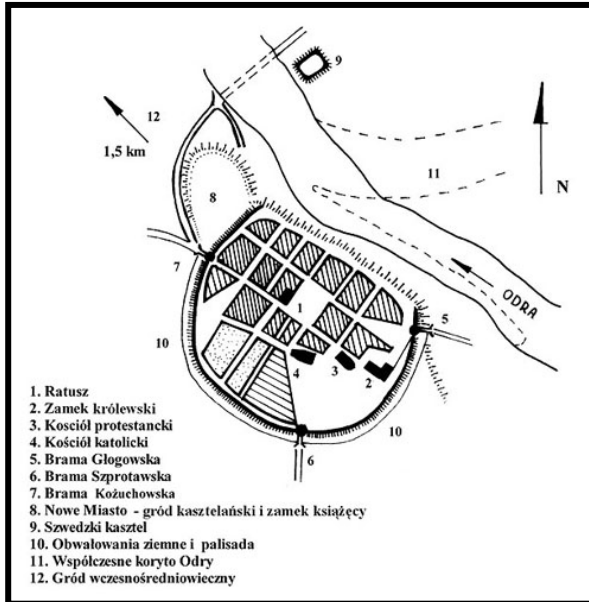
Reconstruction of city of Bytom

The oldest traces of settlement in the vicinity of **Bytom** (Ger: *Beuthen an der Oder*) date to the epoch of the Stone Age (Neolithic) continuing to the Bronze Age, as evidenced by remnants of population settlements and burial grounds of the **Lugii** culture. The first traces of the Slavs in the area date back to the 7th and 8th century. A **Dziadoszan** (West Slavic tribe) stronghold was located here before the advent of the Piast dynasty (a village named Czerna). Most **Dziadoszan** strongholds were burned during the annexation to the Silesian Piast Dynasty (c. 990). In their place arose new princes of authority, first in Głogów and later in Bytom. Bytom city was located about 1.5 km north of the present town, had an oval shape, and at times, included in the eastern end, the principal residence of the settlement administrator. The western end, which comprised most of the city, included land and homes of various construction for the working class.

The history of Bytom was chronicled by **Gall Anonim**, in which he described the struggles of Boleslaw III Wrymouth with the Emperor Henry V who invaded Poland in August 1109. During this imperial expedition against Poland, the chronicler dedicates a lengthy passage concerning the battle, and praising the strong defense of the settlement and bravery of its defenders. This telling indicates that Bytom played an important role in the defensive system of the state – that of a frontier guard. Bytom carried this role until 1157, when it was burned

by the retreating forces of Frederick I Barbarossa (1122-1190, Holy Roman Emperor; Barbarossa means “red beard”) against Poland’s Boleslaw IV the Curly (1146-1173). Settlement was rebuilt as the seat of a castellan (castle). However, at the beginning of the 13th century, it was abandoned by the Polish troops and burned down to prevent any enemy from using its food supplies as well as having a place to rest and gradually fell into disrepair. (Note: for the next 700 years, the location of the castle site was unknown. Remains of the castle were discovered only in the mid-1960s. Archaeological research at this site continues to this day.) Even before the fall of the castle, and within a short distance, a trade settlement began to develop. Before 1175, a parish church of St. Stefan (a filial of the Cistercian *Abbatia Lubensis* abbey) was built.

The settlement itself was granted German town law in 1263 and subsequently experienced arrival of immigrants during the **Ostsiedlung**. That settlement gave birth to the modern city.



Plan miasta - stan XV-XVIII w.
(City Plan – 15th to 18th c.)

In the first half of the 13th century, the land of Bytom became part of the duchy **Głogów**. In 1289, for the first time, there was a reference to a city named **Bitum**. At that time it was built on the prince's castle. In 1296, the Sisters of Magdalene founded a convent here before moving it to nearby **Szprotawa** (Ger: *Sprottau*) in 1314. In the 14th century the city developed very slowly. The close presence of the Głogów prince significantly inhibited the full development of the town. Additionally, there existed some conditions of a general nature that were not conducive to the development. The beginning of the 14th century was characterized by the presence of a series of disasters. In the years 1313 to 1317 Silesia was affected by famine; in 1338, a plague of locusts destroyed all the crops; in 1349, the "Black Death" epidemic of western Europe, decimated the population for many years; plus, these were politically turbulent times. In 1331, the duchy of Głogów (and thus Bytom) was incorporated into the Czech Republic. In 1344, the city was divided into two parts: the kingdom (Czech) and the Principality (Prince Głogów). This division started the process of transforming different parts of the city into ruling knightly families.

At the end of the 15th century Bytom became the scene of a struggle called "the war of Głogów succession". This war led to serious damage in the principality. During the battle, the army of John II Żagań captured and destroyed the castle in Bytom, and the city itself declined significantly. In 1475, Bytom belonged to merchants Andreas Neumann (75%) and Georg von Glaubitz (25%). They united the previously divided city and most likely to have initiated the construction of City Hall, whose presence is mentioned in 1483.



Georg von Schönaich, XVII

In 1524, the entire town was held by the family of Johann von Rechenberg who introduced the Protestant Reformation to the town. By 1526, Bytom, together with the whole of Silesia was under the rule of the Habsburgs. After 1561, Franz von Rechenberg sold Bytom to Fabian von Schönaich. Von Schönaich fought on the Catholic side in the *Schmalkaldic War*, but protected the Protestants in his domain. Bytom remained in the hands of the family Schönaich until the mid-19th century. His cousin and successor, Georg von Schönaich, made great contributions to the development of the town by the cultivation of the right bank of the Oder River, the planting of several fruit and grape orchards, the building of a new town hall (1602), and a bridge across the Oder. In 1618, a Protestant chapel was built (closed after the *Thirty Years' War* by imperial order in 1653). The biggest achievement by Georg von Schönaich, however, was the establishment of a humanist *Gymnasium academicum* school in 1601, the *Schönaichianum - Carolatheum*. The school had 12 chairs, among them one for Protestant theology, for jurisprudence, medicine and - a novelty - morals. Between 1609 and 1613 a new school house was built. One of the gymnasium students was Martin Opitz, who wrote his *Aristarchus, sive De contemptu*

linguae Teutonicae there, which presented the German language as suitable for poetry. In 1628, the school, however, was closed again by imperial order, since the gymnasium was considered Calvinistic.



Location of Siedlikso
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>

The events of the Thirty Years' War interrupted the magnificent development of the town, for the war came quickly to the lands of Bytom ... in 1616, the town was fortified. In 1620, Bytom hosted **Siedlikso's** (Ger: *Carolath*) Protestant "Winter King" Frederick V, who was defeated by the Catholics of the Białą Górą (White Mountain) and fled through Silesia to Germany. This sympathetic shelter was extended by the Protestant Johann Schönaich. After this visit, Bytom prepared to repel the approaching imperial army. After the occupation of the town by Liechtenstein dragoons, which together with the emperor's soldiers plundered and nearly destroyed the city, Bytom was re-Catholicized by force in 1628. Ten years later, the Swedes conquered the lands of Bytom and Siedlisko, both forming a combined outpost. In subsequent years, the city was the scene of imperial and Brandenburg army marches. The end of the war did not bring major changes in the position of the population.

Until 1650, Bytom was the administrative center of the military that stationed Swedish troops in Silesia. Misfortunes continued to plague the city after the war. In 1694, the town was destroyed by a great fire. Reconstruction lasted until 1710; all the buildings were rebuilt, except the old school, whose remains were used in the construction of the evangelical church. The town was raised to the status of a state country by decree of Emperor Leopold I of Habsburg in 1697.

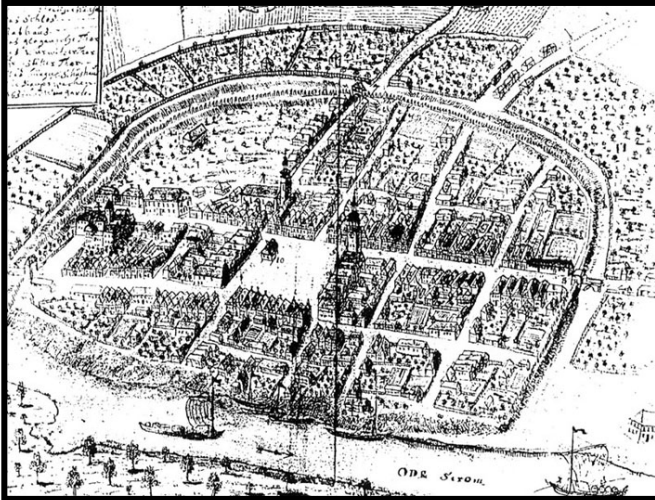
In 1740, Silesia seized by Prussian King Frederick II. This event resulted in the Bytom area once again finding itself in the orbit of great political events. The Silesian Wars (1740-1742, 1744-1745), and especially the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), has once again caused destruction of large swatches of the region. Bytom citizens had to submit to Russian and Austrian occupying the country for food and forage for horses. Time did not pass, of course, without fraud, robbery and rape.

Change of Bytom's nationality resulted in the rupture of traditional economic ties with the Habsburg monarchy and Poland as well. This situation meant that Bytom rose very slowly from the devastation of war.

The early 19th century was indeed tumultuous, like a few decades earlier, during the Napoleonic Wars, the city became the scene of military marches - first the French preparing to siege Głogów in 1806, then Russian and Prussian in 1813. Requisitions and contributions once again weakened the position of Bytom. Only a "quiet period" in mid-19th century enabled the inhabitants a normal life.



Siedlikso Castle
Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>



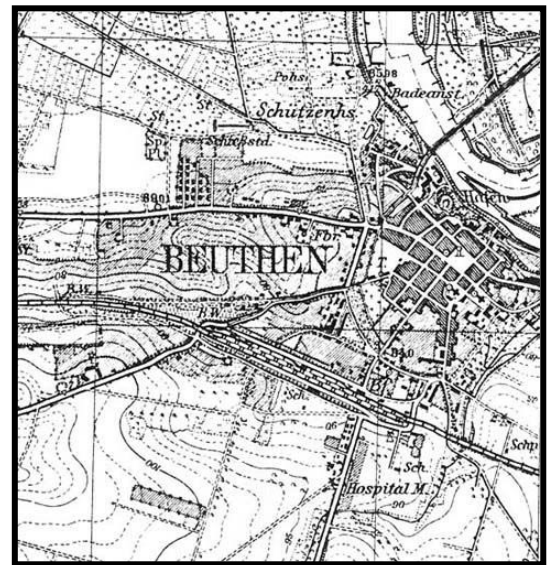
Bytom Panorama miasta - połowa XVIII w.
(Bytom panorama – mid-18th c.)

From the 18th century, the Bytom local economy was dominated by agriculture, growing hops and vines. In the mid-19th century Bytom belonged to the major wine producers in Silesia; the industry even grew wickerwork. The city's economy, however, remained in the shadow of the fast-developing medium, which clearly in the first half of the 19th, became Nowa Sól. In the 1870s, the town received a railway connection with Głogów and Nowa Sól. Since 1884, there existed an active open pit coal mine.

In 1907, construction started on an iron bridge over the Oder River. Larger enterprises arose: urban gasworks, bristle works, and some smaller industrial businesses – primarily crafts. In the 1930s, the inland port was modernized and extended and saw the construction of a new residential area – in the direction to Kożuchów. At

the same time, under the German war preparations, more than a dozen concrete bunkers were built in the city and the surrounding area. They comprised part of the fortifications of the middle Oder River.

In the early years of World War II, the city was not affected by the war. It was only in 1944 that Bytom began to see Allied aircraft. The population was directed to the construction of fortifications on the right bank of the Oder River in the vicinity of quarrying channel. Preparations were also made on the old pre-war consolidation of the left bank. In mid-January 1945, the population was evacuated and the city turned into a center of resistance. On February 13, 1945 the town was overrun by Soviet troops. During the fighting the bridge over the Oder River and several residential buildings were destroyed. Increased damage occurred to the postwar city by Soviet troops in order to obtain construction materials to rebuild the destroyed towns of central Poland.



Mapa miasta (City map), 1938

The first Polish settlers appeared in Bytom in the summer of 1945, who organized the new Polish administration. The German inhabitants were expelled westwards. Until 1945, the official name of the city was *Beuthen an der Oder*. After transfer to Polish control, the town was named Białobrzezie. The current name of Bytom Odrzański is used since 1947.



Bytom Odrzański Coat of Arms

Sources, References, and Further Reading:

Principal Source: The texts and a selection of photos, mapping ...

Thomas Andrzejewski, City Museum in Nowa Sól

Additional Archival photos and maps from the collection of:

City Museum in Nowa Sól

Archives of the State Service for Protection of Monuments in Zielona Góra

Richard Szczygiel Bytom Odrzański

Mateusz Wrzaszcz Graphics

Ed Rozyłowicz 2009 Color Images, Bytom Odrzański



1. The **Lugii, Lugi, Lygii, Ligii, Lugiones, Lygians, Ligians, Lugians, or Lougoi** were an ancient Germanic tribe attested in the book *Germania* by the Roman historian Tacitus. They lived in ca. 400 BC – 300 AD in Central Europe, north of the Sudetes Mountains in the basin of upper Oder and Vistula rivers, covering most of modern south and middle Poland (regions of Silesia, Greater Poland, Mazovia and Little Poland). Most archaeologists identify the Lugians with the Przeworsk culture. The source of their power was control of the most important middle part of the Amber Road from Sambia at the Baltic Sea to the provinces of Roman Empire: Pannonia, Noricum and Raetia. A tribe of the same name, usually spelled as *Lugi*, inhabited the southern part of Sutherland in Scotland. Roman records sometimes identify the Lugii with the Vandals, and East Germanic tribe.
Sources: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lugii> ... <http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%81u%C5%BCyce>
2. **Wieś** (Latin: *PAGUS*, *rus*) – definition: a town in a compact form; concentrated, scattered buildings, and existing features of an agricultural or service related habitation, having no civic rights or status of a city.
Source: J. Szymański, *Nauki pomocnicze historii* (Auxiliary Sciences of History), Warszawa 2004
3. Village first mentioned as **Szczhabna Nova**, a medieval knighthood. In 1825, there was a palace, a farm (agri-business aimed at the mass production of grain destined for disposal, using forced labor of peasants (known as serfdom); the first farms were on ecclesiastical and monastic estates.), a windmill, a brewery and distillery. The locality carried the name Neu Tschau, which was changed to Schlieben in 1937. **Source:** http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nowe_%C5%BBabno
4. **Lasocin** (formerly German *Lessendorf*) is a village in the administrative district of Gmina Kożuchów, within Nowa Sól County, Lubusz Voivodeship, in western Poland. It lies approximately 7 kilometres (4 mi) east of Kożuchów, 8 km (5 mi) south of Nowa Sól, and 27 km (17 mi) south-east of Zielona Góra. **Source:** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lasocin,_Lubusz_Voivodeship
5. **Otyń** (Ger: *Deutsch-Wartenberg*) is a village in Nowa Sól County, Poland. As of 2004 it has about 1200 inhabitants. The first mention of the source of the town dates from the year 1313. The Gothic palace and church of Otyń were a property of the Society of Jesus from 1661 until its suppression in 1776, Duke Peter von Biron of Courland and Semigallia bought it in 1787 and called the place *Deutsch-Wartenberg* to distinguish it from his estates in Syców (German: *Groß-Wartenberg*). After his death in 1800 his daughter Dorothea inherited Otyń, her children sold one part to the former Prussian minister Karl Rudolf Friedenthal in 1879, while the other part went to the Radziwiłł family and later to the House of Czartoryski. It lies approximately 6 kilometres (4 mi) north of Nowa Sól. The village was named: Otin (1313) - Wartinberg (1443) - Wartenberg (1791) – Deutsch Wartenberg (1937). **Source:** Tomasz Andrzejewski, *Miejscowości powiatu nowosolskiego. Rys historyczny, Nowa Sól, 2004.* (Towns of Nowa Sól, Historical background) ... <http://www.glogow.pl/okolice/podstrony/novosolski/otyń.htm>
6. **Głogów** is one of the oldest towns in Poland. It was founded as a grad by a West Slavic tribe called the *Dziadoszan*. The name of the town derives from *glóg*, the Polish name for **hawthorn**. Of interest: The town was made into a stronghold by the Nazi government in 1945 during World War II. Glogau was besieged for six weeks by the Soviet Red Army and was 95% destroyed. After the Yalta Conference, the city, like the majority of Lower Silesia, was given to Poland and German-speaking inhabitants were expelled. In May 1945 the first Polish settlers came to the renamed city of Głogów to find only ruins; the town has not been fully rebuilt to this day. The town started to develop again only in 1967, after a copper foundry was built there. It is still the largest industrial company in the town.
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C5%82og%C3%B3w>
7. **Gall Anonim** (d. after 1116) - the first chronicler on Polish territory, the author of Polish *Chronicles* (Lat: *Cronicae et gesta ducum principum Polonorum sive.*)
8. **Iskry, Henryk Samsonowicz**, *Polska, losy państwa i narodu* (Poland, fate of the state and nation), 1992
9. **Bytom Odrzański** ... http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bytom_Odrza%C5%84ski
10. **Bytom Odrzański Official Web Site** ... <http://www.bytomodrzański.pl/cms/index.php>
11. **Siedlisko** ... http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siedlisko,_Nowa_S%C3%B3l_County