

Translator's Corner

J. Durban Odhner, Editor

Translators' Conference

Continuing our coverage of the historic Translators' Conference of August, 1988, we are pleased to present the text of a delightfully pertinent talk by the Rev. John Elliot, who has not minced words in several matters relating to the "career" of translating the works of Emanuel Swedenborg.

In his section called *Swedenborg Mss*, Rev. Elliot mentions that no one has yet published the annotations in Swedenborg's copy of the *Schmidius Bible* in Latin. In response to this, let me say that the Iungerich "translation" (done largely by students) is extremely faulty, and that Dr. Acton and I started working together on a Latin edition back in 1949. Subsequently, after I went abroad, both of us continued, and the results are available in xerox form. It is, however, more than "an admittedly difficult task"—it is in places an impossible task to fill in the gaps produced by sometimes quite wide loss of page edges. Dr. Acton loved this puzzle, and it is fascinating if one has plenty of time to spend on it; but too much wild guess-work makes the results unreliable.

Ongoing Translations

Also in this issue we continue the M. C. David / J. D. Odhner English version of *De Sale Communi (On Common Salt)*.

This seems a good opportunity to express appreciation of the efforts being made by other journals to address the matter of translations of Swedenborg's Writings. Specifically we are referring to *Studia Swedenborgiana*, edited by the Rev. Dr. William R. Woofenden, currently pre-publishing his translation of *Nova Hierosolyma et ejus Doctrina Coelesti*; and *New Church Life*, edited by the Rev. Donald Rose, which is pre-publishing portions of the translation of *De Amore Conjugiali* being done by the Rev. N. Bruce Rogers.

My appreciation is accompanied by sympathetic understanding of the struggles fellow-translators have to pass through—some due to the intrinsic problems of rendition, others to the lack of insight in those who would be their judges.

As the purpose of pre-publishing these translations is to obtain feedback, I do have one observation for each of these gentlemen.

In paragraph 220 (NCL, October 1988) of CL, heading, I would suggest that *copia* has no other meaning than *potentia*. What is "sexual abundance"? *Copia* means "supply, abundance, ability, power," etc., but in this context ability is being equated to potency.

In the title *De Nova Hierosolyma etejus Doctrina Coelesti*, Dr. Woofenden is suggesting *Doctrina* - "Philosophy," *Coelesti* - "from Heaven." I do agree with "from heaven," in situations where "heavenly" tends too much toward "ecstatic." But I feel that the word "philosophy" for *doctrina* is unsatisfactory. Certainly, current American English shuns the word "doctrine" in favor of something like "beliefs." But "teachings" is the *exact* meaning.

¶ XXXIII.

Production of Salt from Burning Wood or Charcoal, According to Agricola¹⁴⁰

Those who manufacture salt with burning wood, by pouring salt water on it, have to make trenches in which to arrange the wood. These should be twelve feet long, seven feet wide and two and a half feet high, so that the water that is poured in does not run out. They are built up on every side with slabs of rock salt (which are easily obtained), so that they do not take in water, and lest earth fall in from the front, back or sides. But since the coals turn into salt along with the salty liquid, the Spanish, according to Pliny, also judge that the type of wood is of importance. Oak is best, since this by its nature, with its pure ash, enhances the strength of the salt. Elsewhere hazel is praised. But still, salt made from wood of whatever kind, is not highly recommended; it is black and insufficiently pure, on which account this method for making salt is rejected by the Germans and Spanish.

¹⁴⁰ *De re metallica* (originally published 1530 and 1561) by Georg Bauer, known as a mineralogist under the name Georg Agricola.

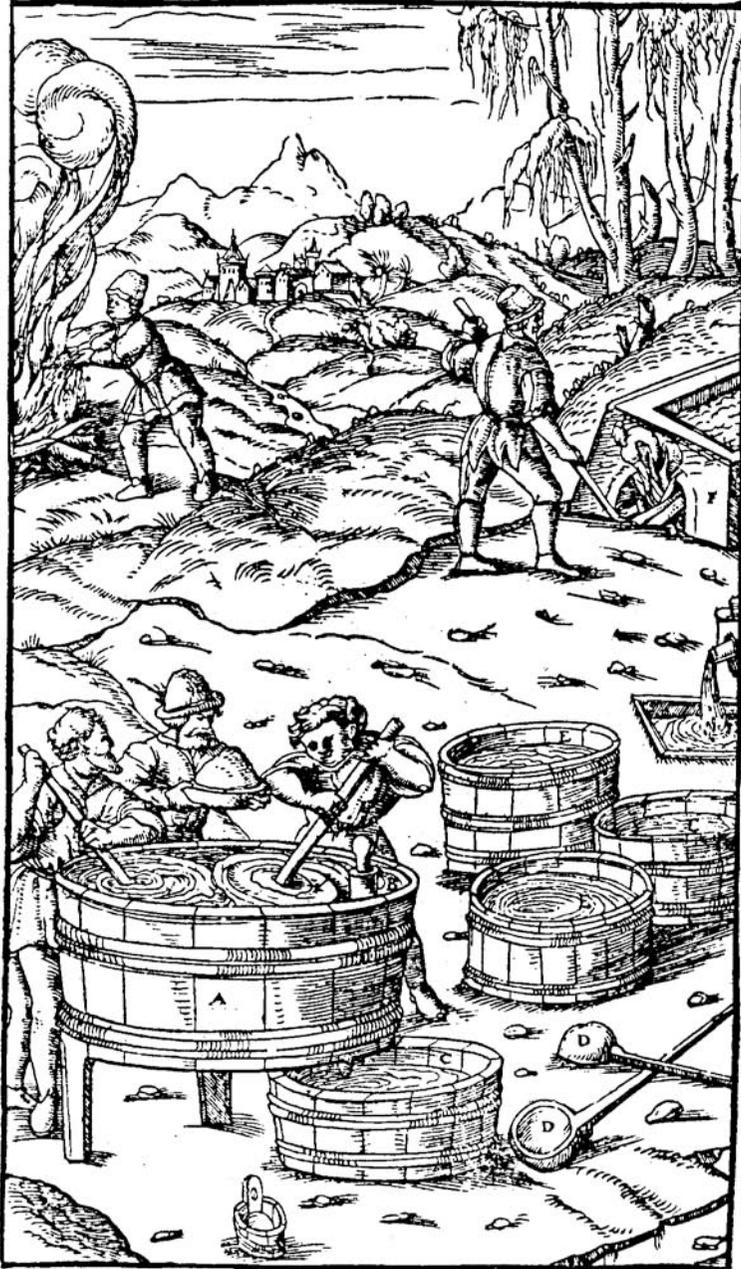


Trench A. Vessel into which salt water is diverted B. Spoon C. Jar attached to a pole D.

¶ XXXIV.

Dissolving Salt from Saline Earth

According to Agricola: The solution from which the salt is prepared is made from saline earth, or earth abounding in salt and saltpeter, but lye is made from the ash of sticks or twigs. But a solution results from the saline earth, which when boiled down produces a given amount of salt. From the second kind of earth comes a solution producing both salt and saltpeter. But from the ashes comes lye, from which only salt is produced. First, they throw into a big barrel [A] both ashes and earth, and then add fresh water to it. After this ash or earth is stirred with poles for almost twelve hours, it absorbs



salt. Then the stirrer [B] is removed from the barrel, the residue is caught by the basin [C], and soon the solution either becomes salty, or the lye, drawn out with little vessels [D], is poured into small barrels [E]. Toward the end [of the process] it is poured over into an iron or lead pan, and boiled until by evaporation the liquid is condensed into salt.

*Elsewhere.*¹⁴¹ In the kingdom of Prussia there is an abundance of salt springs. Elsewhere in that kingdom, there is a district where, especially when the weather is rather hot, salt sprouts and grows out of the ground as thick as the back of a knife, no differently than if the earth were encrusted with a little snow. This crust is scraped off by the poor inhabitants of the place, dissolved and evaporated into salt. It is strong enough and of such a good quality that one measure of it is worth as much as two measures of Halle or Lüneburg salt. And it is only dissolved once. Even the residue thrown away is said to be very salty, so the supply is so great that a large portion is rejected. When this salty crust has been scraped off, after two hours have passed (depending on how hot the sun is) the ground again grows white and encrusted with salt, as before. But if the ground is dug out to a depth of one palm, a large amount of rather fresh water is found with no salt in it, that can even be used very well for making tea. The deeper one penetrates, the more fresh water one finds. There are wells of fresh water in that place, thirty or forty ells deep; the deeper the well, the more easily fresh water can be had. Some think that there are salt-domes underneath this place, but this matter has never been investigated. The herb *kaly* grows abundantly there, and occurs in three varieties, with leaves [either] longish, large or broad. This herb, however, is rarely found in the vicinity of salt springs (*Bresslauische Natur- und Medicin-Geschichte*).

[figure opposite]

A is a large barrel. B a stirrer. Basin, C. Deep spoon, D. Small barrels, E. Pan, F.

¹⁴¹ "Elsewhere" stands for "Dissolving of Salt from Saline Earth elsewhere," which words are the first of a ¶ written at the end of the ms. We believe the author wished to have it placed at this point.