

# Fragments of wooden water pipes from the historic water supply network of Gdańsk

AUTHOR



TIME AND PLACE OF CREATION

Place:  
, Poland

TECHNICAL DATA

Dimensions:  
length:1770 mm

OTHER

MIM 1362/IV/50

KEYWORDS

hydrotechnika, woda, wodociąg

DESCRIPTION

Wooden pipes were an element of the water supply line that provided the residents of Gdańsk with potable water taken from the canals of the Radunia river. Gdańsk's water pipelines, dated to the 14th century, are considered to be the oldest such system in the territory of Poland. From the beginning, they were extended with more and more publicly accessible, underwater reservoirs called sumps. Sumps were the equivalent of municipal wells, but, unlike wells, they did not use groundwater but were fed with water from remote water intakes through wooden pipes. Water supply systems were also later extended to include individual water connections for properties. Pipe sections were made by boring pine trunks using drills and gimlets, and then connecting them with iron or lead connectors with flanges that allowed the consecutive sections to be clamped together. As the wooden pipes naturally deteriorated, they were periodically replaced. In later centuries, they were gradually replaced by more durable pipes of cast iron, stoneware, lead, reinforced concrete, and plastic. The last parts of Gdańsk's wooden pipelines remained in use until as late as the mid-19th century. The pipe sections presented here were found during renovation works conducted near St. Mary's Church in Gdańsk. Interesting fact: From the 16th century, the

necessary pressure in the water supply system was provided by a water machine that was called the Wasserkunst (German for “water art”) in Gdańsk. It consisted of a wheel pump and a water wheel propelled by the energy of the flowing water. A similar device also worked in Kraków, where it was called the “rurmus”. References: Wodociągi, “Gedanopedia” website, <https://www.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=WODOCI%C4%84GI> (Accessed: 8.05.2021).