

## Abstract

Funeral cast iron plastics offer an unique insight into the blending of art and trade in the 19th century. The Brdy region represented a very important centre of iron manufacture at that time, from which artistic ingenuity as well as skilled trade spread.

The project *Funeral cast iron plastics from the Brdy Region examined considering its Contacts with Cast Iron Manufacturing Centres in Prussia and Moravia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* presents the Brdy cast iron within the context of the most important production centres of cast iron in Prussia, Moravia and Austria. 39 sample books were examined and described and photographic documentation of 2020 funeral monuments was gathered. 547 of these were documented in Berlin, 142 in Gliwice, 559 in and around Hořovice, Beroun, Rožmitál, Plzeň, and Plasy, 376 in the region of Blansko and Frýdlant nad Ostravicí, in and around Mariazell, pictures of 396 monuments were taken. Funeral cast iron plastics stand between artistic and commercial cast iron production. Three areas of Funeral cast iron Production in central Europe were identified and examined.

The first one arose from the Prussian foundries in Berlin and Gliwice. The foundry of Plasy and also the Fürstenberk foundry in Beroun as well as the older production of the Blansko foundry are linked to the heritage of the Prussian foundries. Typical features of that Funeral cast iron plastics are neo-classicist and sober neo-gothic patterns. These features continued in Berlin until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The second area lies in the Brdy region in Czech. The Brdy samples which came into being around the 40s and 50s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These influenced the production of Funeral cast iron plastics in the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire and that also in places with its own tradition of cast iron manufacture. There were many appealing types of crosses among the Brdy samples, which met the taste of common people. Among the Brdy funeral cast iron plastics, there were naturalistic crosses, imitations of forged crosses,

neo-classicist, historicist as well as crosses inspired by baroque and gothic patterns.

The third area is that of the Blansko cast iron from the 2nd half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It distinguishes itself with free standing statues and very interesting kinds of funeral cast iron plastics. These tradition spread in Austria, Silesia, and Czech. Due to its complexity it wasn't as widely spread as the Brdy samples.

A quiet important factor for the spreading of the Blansko samples was the fact that Moravian iron works used to have agencies in Vienna.

After 1900 innovations imposed themselves, even though the core of the Brdy type crosses kept being commercially successful. Innovations were introduced in many ways, historicists items continued being cast, though simpler crosses were cast also. The most important new items were without doubt art-nouveau and modern crosses.

Bonds between the management of Czech and Moravian foundries and their artists played a significant role at the beginning of the manufacture of artistic cast iron items in Czech and Moravia. Even exchanges of models have been documented. As there wasn't any copyright law and due to the friendly relationship between the ironworks, patterns, samples and even models of Funeral cast iron plastics were exchanged quite liberally. Even though healthy competition among the works wasn't negatively affected by this friendly coexistence.