

Abstract

This paper reflects one of the largest European organ companies, operating from the late 19th century to the second decade of the 21st century. The company was founded under the name Gebrüder Rieger in 1873 in the Silesian town of Krnov (then the German name Jägerndorf). In 1904 it changed its name to Rieger, which was used until the end of the Second World War. After its termination, the German owners were expelled, the factory was then taken over under national administration and subsequently nationalized. At the same time, a smaller organ workshop by Josef Kloss was also included. The factory has since used the Rieger-Kloss brand on its instruments. After 1989, the plant was privatized, but ended its activity in 2015.

The work follows not only the history of the company, but also the issues of artistic and structural specifics of the Krnov instruments. On the artistic level, these organs were, in the beginning, heavily influenced by the paradigm of the so-called romantic organ (or even the stimulus of the Cecilian reform), which in Central Europe experienced the greatest development at the time of the founding of the company, and culminated at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and then by the ideas of the reformist organ movement that has affected the production of the factory since about the second quarter of the 20th century, more or less until its last stage. Rieger has made use of the most of the technical innovation that organ development has brought, or more precisely often created the innovation itself. Its production was characterized by factory processing, which sometimes resulted in the apparent stereotype of the instruments produced, but at the same time it was able to build instruments of a high quality, meeting international organ-making standards. Over the course of its duration, the factory manufactured over 3730 instruments, which were exported practically all over the world.

The theoretical explanation, devoted to the history of the company, to its business strategy and broader social contexts, as well as to all the relevant specifics of the Krnov organs and their method of production, is supplemented by a model analysis of a selected sample of instruments from the individual development phases of the factory. The record also brings a complete opus list of organs produced.