

## Summary

The purpose of the following doctoral dissertation is to present the history of the development of the watchmaker's firm Gustav Becker, which functioned in the 19th and 20th century. In addition, basing on the activities of the founder of the company – Gustav Becker, I will try to look into the characteristic features of the industry and the directions of its development in the discussed period.

The time censure was not strictly determined, which procedure was done deliberately. It was applied due to the fact that the development process of watchmaking has been outlined over the course of time. Moreover, an additional advantage of the work can be noticed due to the use a graphic form that will certainly help to better illustrate the raised issues. The work, through a cross-sectional analysis of Gustav Becker's company, also illustrates the watchmaking industry as well as competitive companies thanks to which it was possible to use a comparative analysis.

During the research concerning the doctoral dissertation the analysis covered a broadly understood interdisciplinary literature. In addition, I also drew attention to the current state of research where there is a free field for investigation regarding the in-depth analysis of the presented topic. Thus, I intend to fill this area with the presented work.

The dissertation has been divided into chapters so that each of them could refer to the most important events in the biography of Gustav Becker and the history of the company, which will significantly affect the in-depth analysis of the topic and will allow me to answer the research questions. In the first chapter, we will have the opportunity to become acquainted with the short outline of the development of watchmaking, which will introduce the history of the watchmaking industry. In addition, I will also focus on the Becker family with the most important part considering the period when young Gustav gained experience in the industry. This will allow me to bring closer the previously unknown biographical elements from the life of Gustav Becker. In the second chapter, I will analyze the beginnings of the Becker company and outline the economic conditions at the time of the start of the first factory. I will also draw attention to events that had a significant impact on the future of the company. The next chapter presenting the fate of the factory after the founder's death was a stage of the independent actions and the fight against a difficult market and competition. The chapter discusses the significant issues of "internal" competition that grew on the foundations of

Gustav Becker's company. The fourth chapter is a kind of the end and the beginning of a new "era" when the company, through agreements and connections, becomes in 1899 a large enterprise *Vereinigte Freiburger Uhrenfabriken Aktiengesellschaft inkl. Gustav Becker vormals*. An important part of this and other chapters will be based on the analysis of archival documents. This will allow us to take a look at some events and how they were perceived by the then company's leaders as it was popular to note any changes on various types of notes. In addition, the preserved documents also refer to the company's finances, which will allow us to pay attention to certain historical events that had an impact on the company's condition. Another key element which played a crucial role in the watch industry concerned politics as it was an inherent factor of the development of the economy. In addition, the issues of employment and working conditions of women in a watchmaker industry as well as remuneration for the performed work will also be addressed. An important chapter entitled *The company's achievements in the years 1850-1930* will allow us to illustrate more closely the history of the development of the "brand" by Gustav Becker through the analysis of world exhibitions where the company presented its products and competed internationally going far beyond the local market. Competition at the international level allowed to reach recipients all over the world and thus the company's products also gained recognition. However, at the same time the company also drew attention of a strong competition, which was quite noticeable in the 20th century, what resulted in establishing unequal cooperation with Junghans.

In my work, I often refer to a comparative analysis regarding the construction of timers and the history of clocks. Apart from it, basing on the attached illustrations, I try to highlight individual changes, solutions or trends that had a significant impact on the further development of timepieces in the period in question. An additional part of the work consists of an attached Gustav Becker's catalogue of products. It is an important element of the whole work as thanks to it we have the opportunity to look at products as the company's offer for the clients. Unfortunately, this type of documents issued by various companies has survived to the present days in a small amount. Thus, I think that it was necessary to attach the said catalogue to the work.

The end of my doctoral thesis includes a presentation of the analysis of the discussed issues and the obtained results. The very history of the described company was set in the turbulent period of the 19th and 20th century both in political and economic terms. Thus, it had a fundamental impact on the development of the entire watch industry.

Alexandra Bielej