

## Summary of the PhD Thesis

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Title: Tree beekeeping of the Kurpie Green Forest from the end of 16th until mid-19th Century

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The theme of the thesis is beekeeping of the Kurpie Green Forest from the end of 16th until mid-19th century. It played an important role in the development of the region, as well as its eventual image in the 19th century. Tree beekeeping has never been thoroughly studied before, despite an extensive source base (two printed codes of tree beekeeping laws and hand-written ledgers of court records from Lomza and Przasnysz counties) pertaining to the time frames of its peak development in these zones in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The aim of the presented thesis is a monographic depiction of tree beekeeping of the Kurpie Green Forest in its social, legal and economic aspects, with the background of the ever-shifting political and economic conditions. Illustration of the rules of functioning tree beekeeping, with a special consideration to the concept of the woods as a basic unit of administrative division, its legal protection and principles of usage. The portrait of beekeepers as a socially and economically diverse group, being subject to one beekeepers' law, as well as various beekeepers' organizations, their structures and rules in the social, legal and economic fields. Depiction of beekeepers' courts, operating on the basis of the written codes of beekeepers' laws and their structures, with a special consideration towards diversification of operating rules and procedures in certain counties, as well as the meaning of beekeeping for the economy and culture of the region in these times. The thesis consists of eight chapters preceded by an introduction – in which the literature and sources are described – and the conclusion. The first chapter discusses the concept of woods as the lowest organizational unit in tree beekeeping. An attempt was made to determine their size and distribution in the area. The names of the forests were analyzed. The principles of legal protection of honey trees, which were part of the honey woods, and the additions belonging to it: meadows, stands, liens and traps are described. Hive marks, their forms, names, meaning, location on a tree and legal protection are discussed. The second chapter deals with the legal forms of hives' leases, inheriting and trading of honey hives: donation, sale, exchange and pledging. It discusses the principles of co-ownership of woods and legal situations in which it was possible for tree beekeepers' organizations to reclaim forests from their owners. The third chapter describes the beekeepers' community, their internal diversity, with particular emphasis on the role of women in the discussed professional group. An attempt was made to reconstruct the everyday life of these people - their costumes, rituals and habits, and customs. The fourth chapter deals with the laws and the duties of beekeepers. The right of the aforementioned beekeepers to use honey trees, mid-forest meadows, gates and traps, is described. Principles of taxation are described in relation to the king in the form of honey and paying other obligations arising from the rights held. The focus is on the requirement to participate in general courts and to take loyalty oath in court. Chapter five discusses the principles of the tree beekeepers' organization and the scope of its activities. Officials working

in tree beekeepers' fraternities are listed: beekeeper district head, beekeeper starost, beekeeper clerk, beekeeper key master and the measurer of honey tax for His Majesty, as well as their social background, duties and benefits resulting from their function. The sixth chapter deals with tree beekeepers' courts: ordinary and general. They are characterized, the dates of convening and the cases examined are given, and the composition of ordinary beekeepers' courts in the Lomza and the Przasnysz counties are listed. The organization of work in the specified institutions is described, as well as the features of the process. The evidence used in beekeepers' courts is shown, and the judgments and decisions issued are analyzed. Beekeepers' general courts are characterized, the time and frequency of their convening and the cases taken. The composition of beekeepers' courts in the Lomza and Przasnysz counties is examined, and the organization of work in these courts is discussed. The seventh chapter is devoted to the rules and techniques of attending bees in beehives. It describes the structure of the aforementioned beehives and the life of bees. The activities that the tree beekeeper performed with bees throughout the year are analyzed. Given are the structure and the basics of operation of the beekeeper's equipment, as well as methods of obtaining honey and wax. The eighth chapter describes the decline of beekeeping in the nineteenth century and the transition to apiary beekeeping as well as the gradual changes that took place in beekeeping along with the changes in the history of the Republic of Poland. The restrictions put on tree beekeepers by the authorities of the Prussian partition, and then the Russian partition, which eventually made beekeeping collapse are presented. It also includes a description of moving cut logs with bee colonies into gardens and continuation of beekeeping in apiaries. The changing importance of tree beekeeping over the centuries in the economy of individual counties is analyzed. We focus on the role of honey and wax in beekeepers' households. The contribution of tree beekeepers to the settlement of the present-day areas of the Kurpie Green Forest is specified and the villages they founded are indicated. The ending contains a short summary of the collected material and conclusions. The work is supplemented by an appendix containing lists of beekeepers' woods and tree beekeepers in individual counties, lists of beekeepers living in towns and performing the functions of village heads, a list of beekeepers of the Lomza county taking loyalty oaths, a register of court visits in the Lomza and Przasnysz counties, as well as lists of officials from the Lomza and Przasnysz counties beekeepers' courts.

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