

Alena Brabencová

**FROM TRADITION TO TRANSMISSION – LESSONS FROM  
SLOVENIAN BEEKEEPING HERITAGE MANAGEMENT FOR  
PRESENTING THE CZECH BEEKEEPING HERITAGE**

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.

Central European University

Vienna

May 2024

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by

Alena Brabencová

Czech Republic

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,  
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy,  
Management.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Examiner

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External Reader

Vienna  
May 2024

I, the undersigned, **Alena Brabencová**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 24 May 2024



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Signature

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Acknowledgments	4
<b>1. Introduction</b>	8
1.1. Research questions and project aims.....	9
1.2. Positionality and justification.....	10
1.3. Research methodology and limitations .....	12
1.4. Thesis structure .....	14
<b>2. Beekeeping History, Tradition, and Identity: Present Attitudes Towards Beekeeping in Slovenia and Czech Republic</b>	17
2.1 A Land of Beekeepers - Slovenian Beekeeping Heritage as Part of the National Identity.	20
2.1.1 Imagining Slovenia: Constructing the Modern Slovenian Nation and the Role of Cultural Heritage	23
2.1.2 From Anton Janša to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity	26
2.1.3. Green Slovenia: Emergence of Apitourism and Apitherapy	33
2.2 Nation of the Recent Past: Czech Beekeeping Heritage Lost and Found and Possibilities for Reclaiming a Beekeeping Identity.....	36
2.2.1. Renegotiation and Construction of the Czech Identity and Consequences for Remembering Heritage	38
2.2.2. The Art of Forgetting: Episodes from the Czech Beekeeping History	42
2.2.3. Nature Protection and Sustainability in the Czech Republic – The Potential for Reclaiming the Czech Beekeeping Heritage	44
<b>3. Infrastructure of Slovenian Beekeeping Heritage Transmission: International, National and Local Presentations of the Tangible and Intangible Beekeeping Heritage</b>	46
3.1 Slovenian Beekeeping Without Borders: Ministry of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs of Slovenia.....	48
3.1.1 World Bee Day	49
3.1.2 Teaching Slovenian Beekeeping Abroad: The Slovenian Beekeeping Academy	52
3.2 Nation of Beekeepers: Educational Activities of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association.	54
3.2.1 Traditional Honey Breakfast	54
3.2.2 Day of Planting Honey Plants	55
3.3 Musealisation of Beekeeping Heritage: Presentation of Bees in Radovljica, Višnja Gora and Ljubljana.....	57
3.3.1 - <i>Living Together - About Bees and Mankind</i> : Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica	60
3.3.2 - Bees Past and Future - The House of the Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora	64

<b>4. Decentralised Nation, Industrialised Memory – Transmitting the Beekeeping Tangible and Intangible Heritage in the Czech Republic</b>	<b>67</b>
4.1. Beekeeping Schools in Nasavrky and Blatná.....	70
4.1.1. Beekeeping Vocational School and Educational Centre in Nasavrky	73
4.1.2. Beekeeper Training in the Vocational School Blatná	78
4.2. Musealisation Projects in Chlebovice and Hulice.....	81
4.2.1. Bees = Life - Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice	83
4.2.2 Bee World in Hulice	89
<b>5. Beekeeping in Cities and Recommendations for Implementation of Urban Bee Path</b>	<b>94</b>
5.1 The Bee Path in Ljubljana.....	94
5.2. Recommendations for Implementation of an Urban Bee Path.....	97
5.3. Bee Path Prague .....	100
<b>6. Beekeeping Futures and Final Remarks</b>	<b>104</b>
Bibliography	109

Table 1 Elements from the "Beekeeping, a way of life" UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity nomination.....	32
Table 2 Structure of the permanent exhibition in Museum of Apiculture, Radovljica.....	63
Table 3 Structure of the Beekeeping study programme in the Nasavrky Vocational School.....	76
Table 4 Structure of the Beekeeping study programme in the Blatná Vocational School .....	80
Table 5 Components of Bee Path in Ljubljana .....	97
Table 6 Proposed starting agents for the Bee Path Prague .....	104
Figure 1 Map of the places referred to in the Czech Republic .....	16
Figure 2 Map of the places referred to in Slovenia.....	16
Figure 3 'Anton Janša's Bee Area' in Viennese Augarten, Austria .....	27
Figure 4 Painted beehives panels depicting the lives of beekeepers, Museum of Apiculture Radovljica, Slovenia .....	29
Figure 5 Anton Janša's preserved historical apiary with original painted beehive panels, Breznica, Slovenia .....	30
Figure 6 Map of certified providers which are part of the Apiturizem network.....	36
Figure 7 Display of beekeeping objects in the House of Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora, Slovenia .....	64
Figure 8 Display of types of honey in House of Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora, Slovenia.....	65
Figure 9 Renovated reeve's manor, location of Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice, Czech Republic .....	83
Figure 10 Bees=Life, Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice, Czech Republic.....	84
Figure 11 Museum of Chlebovice, Czech Republic .....	88
Figure 12 Renovated school housing interactive exhibition World of Bees in Hulice.....	89
Figure 13 Walk-in honeycomb, part of the display for the 'World of Bees' exhibit, Hulice .....	90
Figure 14 Beekeeper operating rooftop beehives on the Patrol Company's building in Ljubljana, Slovenia.....	94
Figure 15 Part of Bee Path - Observatory beehive in the University Botanical Gardens in Ljubljana, Slovenia .....	95
Figure 16 Urban beehive in front of the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague	100



## 1. Introduction

How can I let them out?  
It is the noise that appalls me most of all,  
The unintelligible syllables,  
It is like a Roman mob,  
Small, taken one by one, but my god, together!<sup>1</sup> – “The Arrival of the Bee Box”, Sylvia Plath

Will the hive survive, will the gladiolas  
Succeed in banking their fires  
To enter another year?  
What will they taste of, the Christmas roses?  
The bees are flying. They taste the spring.<sup>2</sup> – “Wintering”, Sylvia Plath

Bees have been on Earth longer than we have.<sup>3</sup> A painting portraying a human figure climbing a tree and foraging honey inside the trunk, discovered in the Cave of the Spider in Valencia, Spain, dated to the late Mesolith, illuminates the ancient human attraction to these winged creatures and the sweetness they produce.<sup>4</sup> Gene Kritsky observes the important role of bees in Egyptian mythology, in which they were associated with Ra, the sun god: “Re’s role as creator is the opposite of death, and in Egyptian theology, death is not seen as the end of life but rather its source. The god Re, who was the sun, created honey bees when his tears touched the ground.”<sup>5</sup> Bees and honey were also sacred to the Greeks and Romans, as illustrated by various passages in poems by Homer or Virgil.<sup>6</sup> According to Arthur Bernard Cook, “the bee was a sacred

<sup>1</sup> Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (Faber and Faber: 2010): 61-62. Kindle edition.

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (Faber and Faber: 2010): 57-58. Kindle edition.

<sup>3</sup> The oldest recorded fossil bee comes from a piece of Cretaceous amber from New Jersey, approximately 80 million years BP, according to Richard A. Baker and Wit Chmielewski. The fossil was given a Latin name of *Trigona prisca*. Richard A. Baker and Wit Chmielewski, “How Old Are Bees? – A Look at the Fossil Record,” *Journal of Apicultural Sciences* 47, no.1 (2003), 80. [https://apiardeal.ro/biblioteca/carti/Straine/EN\\_-A\\_Jurnal\\_of\\_Apicultural\\_Science\\_vol.47\\_2003.pdf](https://apiardeal.ro/biblioteca/carti/Straine/EN_-A_Jurnal_of_Apicultural_Science_vol.47_2003.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Gulzar Ahmad Nayik, “Honey: Its History and Religious Significance: A Review,” *Universal Journal of Pharmacy* 3, no.1 (January-February 2014), 6. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260677542>.

<sup>5</sup> Gene Kritsky, *The Tears of Re: Beekeeping in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4.

<sup>6</sup> An invaluable scholarly investigation on this topic was written by Dr Rachel D. Carlson in her doctoral dissertation “The Honey Bee and Apian Imagery in Classical Literature,” published at University of Washington in 2015, under the supervision of James Clauss. Last accessed 22 May 2024, [https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/33129/Carlson\\_washington\\_0250E\\_14276.pdf?sequence=1](https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/33129/Carlson_washington_0250E_14276.pdf?sequence=1).

animal closely associated with birth and death of the soul.”<sup>7</sup> Czech beekeeper Josef Kebrle calls bees “the birds of the Muses; who by their spirit and work reveal traces of godly soul.”<sup>8</sup> The poems of Sylvia Plath, whose father was a beekeeper, remind us of the fascination, respect, and sometimes fear that bees make us feel. They also reveal the many metaphors that humans project onto the bee world, such as those of political unity and community. Despite all the efforts of humans to domesticate bees, they remain free, existing in their own living system which is not dependent on us, but on the rules of nature. Yet, the histories of many peoples are intertwined with bees and their products. Beekeeping heritage can thus be understood as both cultural and natural, tangible and intangible. In fact, living beekeeping tradition shows that these dichotomies are theoretical constructs which do not completely represent realities, but rather show different ways people connect to the world around them, to the memories of their lands and to their pasts. In my thesis, I wish to investigate how people relate to bees in Slovenia and the Czech Republic, two countries in the region of Central Europe with rich beekeeping traditions and histories, and how this heritage is presented to the public.

### 1.1. Research questions and project aims

Through the comparison of Czech Republic and Slovenia, and the different ways they relate to and transmit their beekeeping heritage, I wish to develop a series of recommendations for implementation of a Czech urban bee path. The main aim is to be able to create an educational project which would help people relate more closely to their past and to each other through

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Bernard Cook, “The Bee in Greek Mythology,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 15 (1895), 23.

<sup>8</sup> Josef Kebrle, *Dějiny českého včelařství* [History of Czech Beekeeping] (Prague: Zemské ústředí českých včelařů, 1922), 11. Digital Library of Antonín Švehla, last accessed 19 May 2024, <https://dk.uzei.cz/uzei/view/uuid:946a488e-5e57-418c-bc08-b2c22f11841b?page=uuid:3b68720a-5cd5-11e8-a9b6-001999480be2>.

community storytelling and participation in their mutual beekeeping heritage. To achieve this, I am asking the following questions:

- How have historical processes of identity and nation building influenced ways of understanding intangible and tangible beekeeping heritage in Slovenia and the Czech Republic?
- What kinds of transmission projects are being developed in relation to beekeeping heritage and which agents are involved in their execution?
- What aspects of beekeeping heritage are being highlighted in the transmission projects and how do they differ in the Czech Republic and Slovenia respectively?
- How can we encourage creation of communities through beekeeping heritage, and vice versa, how can participation of communities strengthen preservation and adaptation of beekeeping heritage?

## 1.2. Positionality and justification

It is important to reflect on my own experiences and positionality when writing about the beekeeping heritage in these two countries. I grew up in a small industrial town in the north of Czech Republic but spent most of adult life drifting between the village where my father lives, and Prague, the capital of the country where I studied. In 2018, I visited Slovenia for the first time, and was fascinated by the painted apiaries which I encountered during my hikes close to Bohinj Lake in the north of Slovenia. I eventually returned to Slovenia in 2022 and spent a year volunteering at a youth and cultural centre in Medvode, a small town on the outskirts of Ljubljana. As part of the project, I developed a collection of photographs entitled “Beehives of Slovenia.” It was at this time that I met up with beekeepers, climbed rooftops in Ljubljana, travelled through the Slovenian

countryside to see different painted beehive panels and visited various sites of beekeeping heritage transmission.

During this time, I applied to the Cultural Heritage Studies Programme at CEU with the intention to write about Slovenian beekeeping heritage. Further exploration of the topic suggested that a comparative study which would integrate the Czech beekeeping experiences and look at transmission of tangible and intangible heritage in the two countries would be more meaningful and relevant. In April 2023, I conducted research internship in the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana, under the expert guidance of Barbara Sosič, the curator of the rural economy and transportation collection, participating in field trips and having conversations with museum educators and beekeepers, to whom I am incredibly grateful for their knowledge and vulnerability. Concurrently, I got in touch with the Working Society of Super Beekeepers in the Czech Republic and the magazine *Modern Beekeeper*, for which I was able to write several articles about Slovenian beekeeping.<sup>9</sup> In October 2023, I acted as a guide (and an observing participant) during a field trip of Czech beekeepers called “In Anton Janša’s footsteps” in Vienna and Slovenia, visiting sites of beekeeping heritage transmission, including those I write about in this thesis. I also explored the beekeeping sites in Prague and travelled to the village of Chlebovice in the east of the Czech Republic to learn about the local Museum of Beekeeping.

This thesis represents the culmination of research and observations assembled over several years. I believe this data can shed useful light on both the Slovenian and Czech beekeeping heritage transmission contexts. However, as a Czech person concerned with disappearing traditions and dismantled communities in my country, I hope that the analyses conducted in this thesis will

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<sup>9</sup> The ‘super’ in the name of the Working Society of Super Beekeepers refers to a structure in Langstroth type of beehive. The Czech name of this association is Pracovní společnost nástavkových včelařů (PSNV). The name of the magazine in Czech is Moderní včelař, but I translate this name here for the overall cohesion of the text.

produce new insights into the way the Czech beekeeping heritage is currently conceptualised and offer suggestions for improvement in its transmission. Moreover, I long for this project to become one of many future scholarly explorations of Czech intangible heritage, which remains overshadowed by the national historical focus on tangibility. In my country, intangible heritage is in danger of being reduced to its materiality and forgotten, especially without proper research on transmission of craft and traditional disciplines. More interdisciplinary educational programmes dedicated to beekeeping heritage need to be developed by museums and cultural centres in collaboration with communities to strengthen the social and cultural ties between different types of audiences and the general public. I use the Slovenian model as an example of a functioning system of heritage transmission, as a source of inspiration. Despite the two contexts undergoing different historical journeys, through the comparison of Slovenia and the Czech Republic in this thesis, we can infer lessons that can be applied to the Czech beekeeping heritage transmission system and start filling in the gaps between people and their past, at least in this particular area. Bees continue to amaze me, and hopefully this project can transmit some of the wonder I have experienced.

### 1.3. Research methodology and limitations

The first research method used in this thesis is a literature review – of technical and historiographic beekeeping literatures, histories of the Czech Republic and Slovenia, articles concerning nation building processes in the two countries and, of course, scholarship regarding museum education and heritage interpretation. Scholarship related to beekeeping heritage is rich in Slovenia, but very scarce in the Czech context, where the texts are usually focused primarily on the technical practice, bee biology, the legislative framework for beekeeping and state subsidies

for beekeepers. Less attention is paid to the historical and social aspects of beekeeping in the Czech Republic, and even less to the transmission of this heritage.

For this reason, I opted for additional participant observation and interviews in both countries. I visited several beekeeping heritage transmission centres and interviewed museum educators, curators, and teachers of beekeeping. Through my internship at the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, I was able to gain more insight into the Slovenian transmission system, not only in the area of beekeeping heritage, but also in other intangible traditions and crafts. Having acted as a guide for a group of Czech beekeepers during a field trip in Slovenia, I also participated in the transmission of beekeeping heritage and observed the interaction of other Czechs with the Slovenian space, which also provided me with illuminating insights for this thesis.

Slovenia is a much smaller country in its physical size and its population.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore easier to comprehend the fairly centralised Slovenian system of heritage protection and transmission through the analysis of various educational programmes related to beekeeping. The Czech Republic is bigger, and its borders and identities have been historically negotiated on many occasions, resulting in a vaguer formulation of national heritage and a disparate and decentralised system for its protection. There are more than 1000 local Czech beekeeping associations, each valuing their local beekeeping history, but there seems to be absence of narrative for the Czech identity associated with this heritage. This posed limitations to my research, as it took away the possibility to carry out a comprehensive study. Therefore, I opted to examine two case studies in more detail, both of which I believe reflect the situation in other local beekeeping transmission centres. Unless specified otherwise (in the case of Hulice Bee World), the photographs

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<sup>10</sup> According to Britannica, the size of Slovenia is 20,271 square kilometers, and 2,133,000 people live there. The size of the Czech Republic is 78,871 square kilometers, with 11,235,000 inhabitants. <https://www.britannica.com/summary/Slovenia>. <https://www.britannica.com/facts/Czech-Republic>.

complementing this thesis have been taken by me during my field work in both Czech Republic and Slovenia.

#### 1.4. Thesis structure

In the first chapter of my thesis, I focus on the formation of identity and nation in Slovenia and the Czech Republic and on how these notions have influenced understandings and uses of heritage in both countries. In separate subsections, I speak about the beekeeping pasts and presents in both places. The aim of the chapter is to illustrate the widely different contexts, on which the heritage transmissions are dependent, in which the various educational projects exist. In Slovenia, the tradition is part of the cultural consciousness and daily lives of the people, as demonstrated by the recent nomination “Beekeeping in Slovenia – a way of life” to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity. In the Czech Republic, beekeeping is perceived primarily as a technical field of agriculture. In the last section, I consider the futures of Slovenian and Czech beekeeping heritage. In the case of Slovenia, I analyse the rapidly increasing popularity of apitourism and apitherapy, and in the case of the Czech Republic look at possibility of reclaiming beekeeping heritage by establishing continuity between organisations and movements dedicated to environmental protection and care for nature.

In the second chapter, I focus on the infrastructure of the Slovenian beekeeping heritage transmission, which is analysed on an international, national, and local level. In each section, I explore several different presentations of beekeeping heritage and in particular look at their audiences and the aspects of beekeeping tradition they highlight. On the international level, I investigate the World Bee Day and the Slovenian Beekeeping Academy. Two initiatives by the Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association are analysed on a national level, namely the Traditional Honey Breakfast and the Day of Planting Honey Plants (hereafter referred to as melliferous plants). The

last section is dedicated to the musealisation of beekeeping heritage, based on visits to the Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica and the House of the Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora.

In the third chapter, I illustrate how beekeeping heritage is transmitted in the context of the Czech Republic. I briefly speak about the infrastructure of Czech heritage management and protection, which is dissimilar to Slovenia, because of the fundamental fragmentation of national and regional identities, the historical effects of industrialisation, and arguably, the greater territory, which reinforces the need for some degree of decentralisation in heritage care. All of these factors also influence the transmission of beekeeping heritage and its reception, which I focus on in the subsequent analyses. In the first subsection, I look at the syllabi of the beekeeping schools and educational centres in the towns of Nasavrky and Blatná. Two musealisation projects are examined in the second subsection, the Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice and the World of the Bees in Hulice.

The last chapter is dedicated to beekeeping in cities. The global environment is changing, and so traditions must change as well. Urban areas often feature more biodiverse and healthier natural areas than rural environments, transformed as they have been by mass agriculture and overuse of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. In the last chapter, I review one very successful transmission project of beekeeping heritage in Slovenia, namely the Bee Path. Inspired by the Ljubljana Bee Path and based on the preceding analyses in this thesis, I develop a series of recommendations for implementation of an urban bee path in the Czech Republic. Based on the recommendations, I suggest a list of heritage sites and cultural centres in Prague which could serve as a starting point for a future Bee Path Prague project.



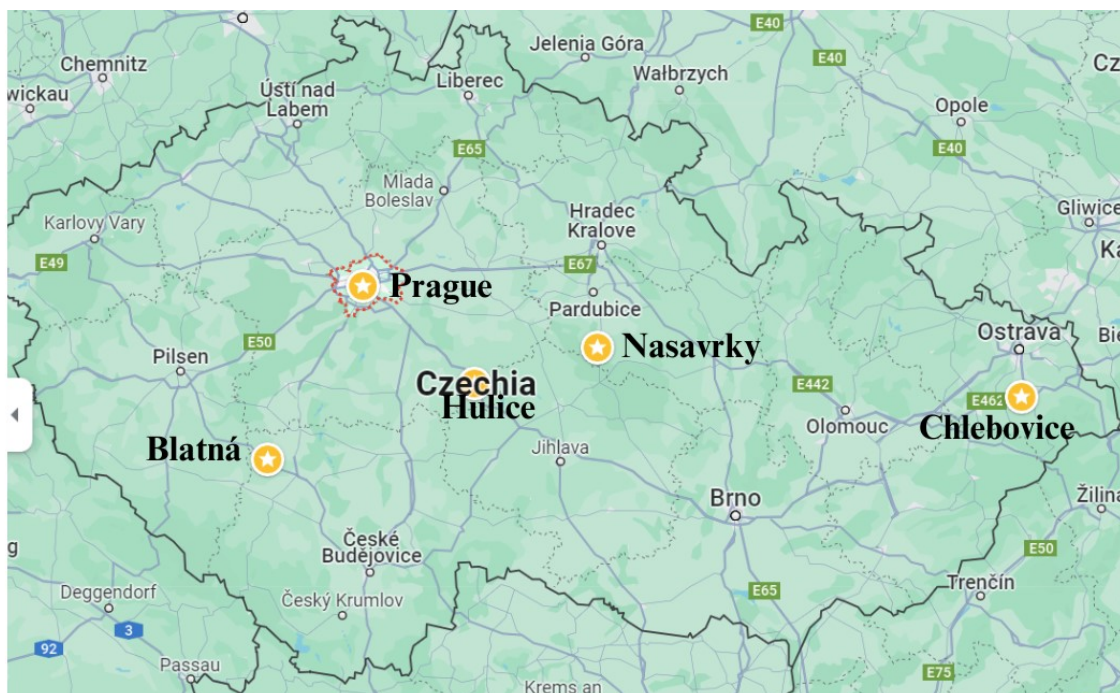


Figure 1 Map of the places referred to in the Czech Republic<sup>11</sup>

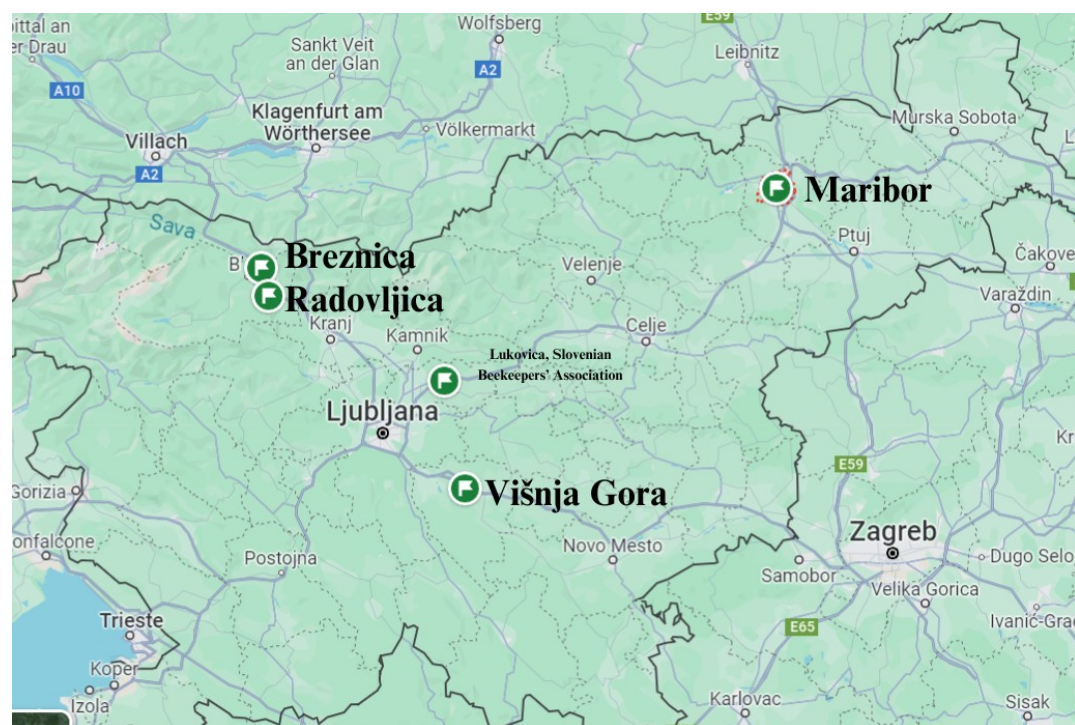


Figure 2 Map of the places referred to in Slovenia<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Source: Google Maps.

<sup>12</sup> Source: Google Maps.

## **2. Beekeeping History, Tradition, and Identity: Present Attitudes Towards Beekeeping in Slovenia and Czech Republic**

When I first travelled through Slovenia, shortly before my nineteenth birthday, I was struck by the beautiful nature, the kindness of the people, the comfort with which the land embraced me. The mountains were vast, and the water clearer than any I have ever seen. Everybody seemed to be proud of their country, proud to be born in a place of such natural richness and diversity. Over the years, I have returned to Slovenia, envious of the feeling of community and affinity with environment and tradition, the lack of which I felt in my own home. The Czech Republic seemed cold to me, alienated from its own history due to imposed negotiations of national identity under the influence of various political regimes of the last century and detached from connections to the land because of heavy industrialisation and mass agriculture. What my foreign gaze saw, some could suggest, is only the result of recent projects of Slovenian nationalisation, since I had no experience of the country before it acquired independence. Similarly, I could be attacked for my overly critical views of the Czech Republic, shaped by my childhood growing up in a small industrial town in the north of the country. Despite still feeling immense fondness for Slovenia and engaging in constant questioning of the Czech state, after reflection on my own positionality, I now realise that the constructions which I built around these two nations are primarily based on my own personal, subjective impressions, and these only partially reflect various trajectories and consequences of social changes and historical events that took place in these two places. In this chapter, I aim to step away from my experiences in order to comprehend and critically investigate multiple layers of social and political developments in the two countries.

The reality on the ground is far more complicated. The national identities of Czechs and Slovenians are grounded in vastly different processes of nation building, taking place before,

during and after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992 and Yugoslavia at virtually the same period between 1991 and 1992. In other words, the contexts are entirely different between the two countries, people, and histories. I believe this is important to emphasise in this thesis project, in order to avoid inaccurate or vague, generalised conclusions about identity and heritage. However, the two concepts are, nevertheless, intrinsically linked, especially during the time when independence was being established and connections enforced between the nation and the state. As David Lowenthal observes, the role of heritage in creating this relationship is rarely apolitical; more often, it reflects the efforts of the state to promote its own domestic and international prestige: “To forge identity and buttress self-esteem, each people vaunts or invents a distinctive legacy. Many assert their heritage’s moral or military, mental or material superiority; many others claim exclusive rights to heritage traits and emblems they consider crucial to their identity.”<sup>13</sup> In order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the different ways beekeeping heritage is presented and perceived, the historical contexts of Slovenia and the Czech Republic will be reviewed as a key to understanding processes of identity building in these countries. Only by dedicating space to comprehending how people relate to their nation, history and land is it possible to achieve an informed insight into present attitudes towards beekeeping heritage, the aspects which are being foregrounded in its presentations, and the audiences for the beekeeping transmission projects in the two countries.

One conviction remained from my Slovenian adventures and was reinforced during my studies in Vienna. The two nations are home to passionate beekeepers who care deeply about their craft and their bees. According to data from 2022, there were 56,474 active beekeepers in the

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<sup>13</sup> David Lowenthal, “Identity, Heritage, and History” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 46.

Czech Republic, which means approximately one beekeeper per 187 people.<sup>1415</sup> In Slovenia, the numbers are similar. According to the Central Registry of Beekeepers, there were 11,359 active beekeepers in 2021, amounting to one beekeeper per 185 people.<sup>1617</sup> These numbers reveal a strong beekeeping presence in both countries, and hint at their rich beekeeping pasts, presents and futures.

The main principle guiding my thesis is that beekeeping transcends the binary distinction between environmental and cultural heritage, as well as the division between tangible and intangible heritage. The differences in the historical and social contexts of the Czech Republic and present-day Slovenia also mean that those with interest in the discipline, be it beekeepers, museum professionals, or government officials must inevitably use different approaches and have different foci based on these dichotomies. In the chapter, I briefly explore the nation building processes and the various ways they informed national identities and approaches to heritage in Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Their scope is limited, but I believe that they will still prove to be useful in relation to the subsequent chapters, providing background information on the historical circumstances through which Slovenians and Czechs understand their present national identities. In the second subchapter, I will focus on the developments and history of beekeeping in the two countries and evaluate how the general public, beekeepers and other communities presently seem to relate to beekeeping; in the case of Slovenia, through the analysis of the “Beekeeping, a way of life” UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity nomination and the letters of support

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<sup>14</sup> Jana Prchliková, “Zpráva o činnosti Českého svazu včelařů, z.s. za rok 2022” [Report about the activities of the Czech Beekeepers’ Association for 2022], *Czech Beekeepers’ Association Website*, published 12 March 2023, last accessed 2 April 2024, <https://www.vcelarstvi.cz/dokumenty-cms/zprava-o-cinnosti-a-hospodareni-csv-z-s-za-rok-2022.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> “Pohyb obyvatelstva - rok 2022” [Inhabitant Data 2022], *Czech Statistical Office Website*, published 21 March 2023, last accessed 2 April 2024, <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/ci/pohyb-obyvatelstva-rok-2022>.

<sup>16</sup> “Čebelarstvo” [Beekeeping], last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://www.gov.si teme/cebelarstvo/>.

<sup>17</sup> Barica Razpotnik, “V letu 2021 število prebivalec upadlo” [In 2021, the number of inhabitants fell], *Slovenian Statistical Office Website*, published 1 January 2022, last accessed 2 April 2024, <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/news/Index/10268>.

sent from the communities, and in the case of the Czech Republic, through the analysis of available literature and online material provided by the regional beekeeping societies and the Czech Beekeepers' Association. In the third subchapter, I will explore the growing rhetoric of linking bees with green and healthy futures of humanity, strongly influenced by the increasing global fears around climate. This rhetoric is mostly present in urban environments, into which bees and natural environments are becoming more and more integrated. In the context of Slovenia, my analysis will mainly focus on the development of sustainable beekeeping tourism and professional apitherapeutic practices. Such changes are not yet observable in the Czech Republic; however, by analysing several Czech organisations and groups concerned with nature protection and agendas of sustainability, I aim to illustrate the existing discursive landscape in which such developments around beekeeping could be promoted and cultivated, giving way to creation of a healthier and more sustainable approach to the environment.

## 2.1 A Land of Beekeepers - Slovenian Beekeeping Heritage as Part of the National Identity

*"To be Slovenian is to be a beekeeper."*<sup>18</sup> - The Website of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association

*"There is nothing more beautiful than a flower in the field that gives buckwheat honey that has a strong smell. There is nothing more beautiful in the world than the humming of the bees, for the master, the beekeeper who likes to sit in front of the hives. He is happy, the sun is warm, and buckwheat honey flows."*<sup>19</sup> - The Beekeeper's Hymn of the Slovenian Beekeepers Association, words by Franc Šivic

As previously established in the introduction, beekeeping in Slovenia is almost omnipresent within the country and both the people and the land are closely connected with their bee companions. Whether it be the colourful traditional apiaries with painted beehive panels, the

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<sup>18</sup> "About," *Slovenian Beekeepers' Association Website*, last accessed 2 April 2024, <https://en.czs.si/>.

<sup>19</sup> Tone Krivec, "Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life" Consent of communities, Nomination file 01857. Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 17. COM 7.b.27, *UNESCO Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857>. Krivec is the President of the Chamber mail choir of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association.

different museum collections presenting beekeeping, active and involved beekeepers, or bees themselves, one will eventually encounter the living remnants of the rich Carniolan beekeeping history. As apparent from the website of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, beekeeping is perceived as an inherently Slovenian endeavour, something that defines the nation and the people - in local, national, and international contexts. This notion is supported by various governmental and non-governmental educational and promotional programmes dedicated to beekeeping heritage, such as World Bee Day or the Slovenian Honey Breakfast, which will be examined in the following chapter. It is almost impossible to imagine Slovenia without bees. The Beekeeper's Hymn celebrates bees and beekeepers in general, but a closer examination reveals that it refers to a specifically Slovenian beekeeping environment. According to Janez Gregori, the first written record of common buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*) in Slovenian lands comes from the income records of the region of Gornji grad from 1426. Gregori further comments on the rapid rise in popularity of the plant: "Buckwheat quickly spread to the other Slovene provinces and became the leading grain in the seventeenth century. The fast spread was in part due to the fact that the peasants initially did not have to pay tithes for it."<sup>20</sup> An article titled "Thank you buckwheat" was published in the Slovene-language newspaper *Agricultural and Artisan News* in 1846 and highlights the crop as inherent part of Slovenian natural and cultural landscape, not omitting its relationship to bees: "Buckwheat gives beauty to every place...because it smells so pleasant and gives abundant honey and wax to the hardworking bees, from which the beekeepers take beautiful combs...It is ours, and it will remain ours. Thank God for her!"<sup>21</sup> And the "honey flows" refers to a customary greeting between members of Slovenian beekeeping societies.

<sup>20</sup> Janez Gregori, "Beekeeping in Carniola in Anton Janša's time" in *The Carniolan Bee: Tradition and Heritage in Modern Beekeeping in Slovenia*, ed. Ida Gnilšak (Radovljica: Radovljica Municipality Museums, 2003): 22.

<sup>21</sup> Okra, "Hvala ajde" [Thank you ajda], *Agricultural and Artisan News* 4, n.41 (14 October 1846), 162. Last accessed 4 May 2024, National and University Library of Slovenia, <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC->



With the high international interest in cultural and environmental heritage and the influx of tourists and expats, it is easy to forget that Slovenia gained independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia only recently in 1991. A Slovenian acquaintance of mine remarked that before this year, Ljubljana was a city he did not particularly like to live in. He said that it was not very interesting or developed, except perhaps in the works of Jože Plečnik. Today, the headlines tell a different story. *BBC Travel* calls Ljubljana “The perfect eco-friendly city break”, referring to the European Green Capital award the city received by the European Commission in 2016<sup>22</sup>. In 2021, the capital ranked number one in the 20 Best Green Capitals in Europe, a list composed by the European Best Destinations organisation.<sup>23</sup> However, as noted by my friend, not many people thought this was the future for the Slovenian capital or land, and it is partially a consequence of the identity and place making processes which took place in eighties and nineties of the previous century. The death of President Josip Tito on May 4, 1980, and inevitable ensuing weakening of the Yugoslav Federation resulted in a strong surge in nationalisation and subsequent calls for the independence of Slovenians and Croats.<sup>24</sup> I will examine these political developments in the first part of this chapter, and their impact on separate

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[VF4RAKUJ](#). In Slovenian, the word buckwheat is feminine, which is why I use the pronoun ‘her’ in my translation.

<sup>22</sup> “The perfect eco-friendly city break,” *BBC Travel*, last accessed 2 April 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/storyworks/travel/seeing-green/ljubljana>.

<sup>23</sup> “Ljubljana ranks first among the 20 Best Green Capitals of Europe,” *Slovenian Government Website*, published 22 October 2021, last accessed 2 April 2024, <https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-10-22-ljubljana-ranks-first-among-the-20-best-green-capitals-of-europe/>.

<sup>24</sup> Yugoslavia was the first union of South Slavic countries which were previously parts of Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires – Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, and two autonomous provinces – Kosovo and Vojvodina. It was established in 1918 as a monarchy, which was abolished in 1945, transforming the union into Democratic Federal Yugoslavia. In 1963, it was renamed into Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since 1944, it was led by Josip Broz Tito, first from a position of prime minister and then a president. After Tito’s death in 1980, social and economic crisis ensued, motivating nationalisms of individual nation states. This tension resulted in Yugoslav Wars and eventual disintegration of the federation. A detailed and comprehensive historical overview is offered by Misha Glenny in *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-2012* (1999), for Tito’s involvement, impact and consequences of his death see Richard West’s *Tito and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia* (1994).

national identities and approaches towards heritage. In the later part of the chapter, I will examine the successive uses of the already extant, but less publicized, beekeeping heritage in strengthening national identity and the national image of sustainability, which are apparent in Slovenia's UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity item as well as the emerging importance of beekeeping in sustainable tourism and apitherapy.

### 2.1.1 Imagining Slovenia: Constructing the Modern Slovenian Nation and the Role of Cultural Heritage

In an article from 1995, Anton Bebler notes: "Slovenia belongs geographically, culturally and politically to Central Europe."<sup>25</sup> It is, however, necessary to critically examine this notion, and understand the identity building process which took place during the 1980s and 1990s in Slovenian society. Lene Hansen poignantly points out in "Slovenian Identity: State-Building in the Balkan Border" the state efforts to establish a historical continuity and homogenous identity for the Slovenian nation: "A major task since June 1991 has been to establish Slovenia as a 'natural state,' that it was natural and logical that Slovenia became independent, and that Slovenia is an organic part of Europe, in contrast with the other former republics in Yugoslavia, who belong to the non-European Balkans."<sup>26</sup> Hansen shows how historical influences have been anachronistically reinterpreted: previous ideologies of pan Slavism and Illyrianism were backgrounded, together with Yugoslav history while the influences of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were emphasised as seminal for Slovenian history: "The conversion of the Habsburgs from a relation of otherness to one of identity illustrates that identities and threats to identities change over time, and that history

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<sup>25</sup>Anton Bebler, "Slovenia and Europe," *The World Today* 51, no.5 (May 1995): 96. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40396722>.

<sup>26</sup> Lene Hansen, "Slovenian Identity: State-Building on the Balkan Border," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 21, no.4 (October-December 1996): 473. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40644873>.



is being rewritten from the point of view of the present.”<sup>27</sup> When I asked a friend from the south of Slovenia about whether Slovenians still consider themselves ‘Balkan’, he said that they dipped their finger in the melting pot of the Balkan identities, but that most people prefer to think of themselves as Austrian. We may recall here the concept of ‘Balkanism’ - Maria Todorova’s application of Said’s ‘Orientalism’ in the region of Southeast Europe - which the construction of Slovenian national identity essentially embodies: “By being geographically inextricable from Europe, yet culturally constructed as ‘the other’ within, the Balkans have been able to absorb conveniently a number of externalized political, ideological, and cultural frustrations stemming from tensions and contradictions inherent to the regions and societies outside the Balkans.”<sup>28</sup> The ahistorical construction of Slovenian state as ‘non-Balkan’, produced by the nationalist pro-European discourse of 1990s, was also noted by Marko Zajc, who observes of Slovenian intellectuals of the time: “Their homeland is Central Europe, Europe, the world, the Western civilisation, ‘Republic of Lettres’, Christianity, and above all Slovenia.”<sup>29</sup> This identity was not only reinforced by various political nationalist projects, but also by the ongoing national discourse around Slovenian heritage and history.

The new orientation towards Europe and positioning of the Slovenian state as playing an important part of the European history meant searching for sufficient proof legitimising this allegiance. Culture was attributed a significant role in this process, as observed by Marjetka Golež Kaučič: “Suddenly even culture had a greater value because interest in the ‘new’ countries also meant interest in their cultures.”<sup>30</sup> The Slovenian language was particularly emphasised. Hansen

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<sup>27</sup> Hansen, 487.

<sup>28</sup> Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009): 188.

<sup>29</sup> Marko Zajc, “Slovenian Intellectuals and Yugoslavism in the 1980s: Proposition, Theses, Questions,” *Südosteuropäische Hefte* 4, no.1 (2015): 50. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-428352>.

<sup>30</sup> Marjetka Golež Kaučič, “Slovenian Folk Culture Between National Identity and European Integration Processes,” *Narodna umjetnost* 46, no.1 (2009): 38. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/61508>.

observes that “the first half of the nineteenth century was under the influence of romanticism, which believed in the existence of a unique Slovene soul, that a ‘Slovene-ness’ was embedded in the Slovene language, history and folklore.”<sup>31</sup> This attitude was adopted again during the period of nation building in the 1980s and 1990s, reviving cultural traditions and canonising Slovenian poets of the nineteenth century, such as France Prešeren, whose poem “Zdravljica” was later chosen as the Slovenian national anthem. In her analysis of Slovenian national public TV’s role in reaffirming and reinventing national identity, Žala Volčič observes that “Slovenia as a site of a common culture prevailed...In describing the (media) representations and discourse that my informants themselves were forming and shaping, the uniqueness of Slovenian culture and its particular geographical space were stressed over and over again.”<sup>32</sup> At the time, beekeeping was already recognized as an important tradition in Slovenia – the predecessor of the Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association was established in Ljubljana in 1873<sup>33</sup>, the Slovenian Beekeeper magazine was published continuously since 1898<sup>34</sup> and the Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica was opened in 1959.<sup>35</sup> It is therefore not surprising that beekeeping was also charged with guarding the mythological soul of the Slovenian nation, and that it was presented in both national and international contexts during the processes of nationalisation and Europeanisation. In her book *Living Together: About Bees and Mankind*, the current director of the Museum of Apiculture, Petra Bole, offers a useful overview of the history and activities of the museum. I want to highlight those

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<sup>31</sup> Hansen, 476.

<sup>32</sup> Žala Volčič, “‘The Machine that Creates Slovenians’: The Role of Slovenian Public Broadcasting in Re-affirming and Re-inventing the Slovenian National Identity,” *National Identities* 7, no.3 (2005): 296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608940500201847>.

<sup>33</sup> “History,” *Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association Website*, last accessed 2 April 2024, [https://www.czs.si/content/A2?sif\\_co=A2](https://www.czs.si/content/A2?sif_co=A2).

<sup>34</sup> “Slovenian Beekeeper,” *Digital Library of Slovenia Website*, last accessed 3 April 2024, <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:spr-EOOK95XE>.

<sup>35</sup> Ida Gnilšak, “The Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica,” in *The Carniolan Bee: Tradition and Heritage in Modern Beekeeping in Slovenia*, ed. Ida Gnilšak (Radovljica: Radovljica Municipality Museums, 2003): 241.

events which can be directly linked to the international promotion of the Slovenian heritage and identity. In 1989, an exhibition of the painted beehive frontal panels, organised by the Museum of Apiculture and the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, took place in Vienna and Berlin, followed by exhibitions in Tolmezzo, Brixen and Freising in the 1990s, and ultimately in Brussels in the European Parliament in 2001. In 2003, the cultural centre Cankarjev dom in Ljubljana hosted the Apimondia Conference, the International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations, sparking interest in Slovenia as a beekeeping hub. Moreover, in 2004, "as part of events to mark Slovenia's accession to the European Union", the beehive panels were exhibited in Ireland, and in 2008, "as part of Slovenia's presidency of the EU", the exhibition was held in Brussels.<sup>3637</sup>

#### 2.1.2 From Anton Janša to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity

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<sup>36</sup> Petra Bole, *Living Together: About Bees and Mankind* (Radovljica: Radovljica Municipality Museums, 2021), 106-107.

<sup>37</sup> Bole, 106-107.



Figure 3 'Anton Janša's Bee Area' in Viennese Augarten, Austria

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries mark what could be called the golden age of Slovenian beekeeping. The first written account of beekeeping in Carniola can be found in Janez Vajkard Valvasor's description of life in the region from 1689.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, I am unable to cover the developments in Slovenian beekeeping history in detail due to the limited length of my thesis and they are not particularly relevant to the topic.<sup>39</sup> However, one particular historical figure, Anton Janša, is often associated with the entire Slovenian beekeeping tradition. His name and

<sup>38</sup> Janez Vajkard Valvasor, *Die Ehre des Herzogthums Krain*, ed. Erasmus Francisci, Peter Radics, Janez Krajec, Josip Pfeifer, (Rudolfswarth, J.Krajec: 1878-1879). <http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:DOC-9ZQWGHIL>. This is a reprint of the original publication which was published in 1689. I state this one here because it is publicly digitally available from the National and University Library of Slovenia. There are fifteen books in total, the parts about Carniolan beekeeping, honey and mead are covered in the third book which is dedicated to the description of the landscape and all different creatures it contains and resources it provides – such as plants, mountains, minerals, magic, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Fortunately, there are many resources on this deeper history available in both Slovenian and English – I can recommend those published by the Radovljica Municipality Museums, as well as monographs by Ivan Esenko. A useful resource is also Ljudmila Bokal's *Beekeeping Terminological Dictionary* (2008), reflecting the rich linguistic beekeeping heritage.

works are particularly relevant for the previous section since in 2017, his birthday 20 May was proclaimed World Bee Day by the United Nations, following a Slovenian proposal. Anton Janša was born in the small northern Slovenian village of Žirovnica into a beekeeping family in 1734. He and his brother Lovrenc were also interested in art, decorating the beehive panels of the family apiary. The brothers eventually left for Vienna in 1766, where they enrolled at the Copper Engraving and Drawing School to learn painting techniques, according to Janez Gregori.<sup>40</sup> After serving as a beekeeper for the Agricultural Association of Lower Austria, he was appointed by Maria Theresa to be a teacher of apiculture at the Imperial Beekeeping School in Viennese Augarten. His beekeeping scholarly work about bee swarms and colonies undeniably proved important for subsequent technological developments in beekeeping, but I would also argue that his relocation to Vienna served as a powerful rhetorical tool for establishing connections between Slovenia and Europe, giving material grounding to a positive depiction of the Austrian-Hungarian influence on Slovenian culture, nation, and history, and more importantly, Slovenian contribution to development of European cultures and traditions.

Janša is the face of the Slovenian beekeeping tradition, which was in December 2022 inscribed onto the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity under the name “Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life”. Before the UNESCO nomination, several elements related to beekeeping were inscribed onto the Slovenian Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage since its establishment in 2011 – apitherapy, breeding queen bees of the Carniolan bee breed, building beehives and apiaries, mobile beekeeping, beekeeping, painting beehive panels, ‘lectarstvo’ (gingerbread making and decorating) and making of wooden models for these honey breads. A comparison with the Czech Republic is important here – overall, the Slovenian Register of

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<sup>40</sup> Gregori, “Beekeeping in Carniola in Anton Janša’s time,” 22.

Intangible Cultural Heritage contains 117 elements, whereas the Czech List of Non-Material Elements of Folk Culture contains only 33 inscriptions.<sup>41</sup> I will return to this relative imbalance in the following sections.

The name of the Slovenian UNESCO nomination highlights the important perceived intangible character of beekeeping knowledge and craft, which is often backgrounded in prevalent debates focused on technological innovation or production of honey and wax. The nomination shows how lives and national, local and professional identities of Slovenian individuals and communities are formed around beekeeping through many social and cultural rituals and symbols. The inscription speaks of the rich beekeeping history and the modern developments and changes it is facing in the present. The most important symbols in the nomination are summarised in the table below, providing an overview of the most common referents of the Slovenian beekeeping tradition, which will be mentioned throughout the thesis.



Figure 4 Painted beehives panels depicting the lives of beekeepers, Museum of Apiculture Radovljica, Slovenia

<sup>41</sup> “Czech List of Non-Material Elements of Folk Culture,” *National Institute of Folk Culture*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://www.nul.k.cz/narodni-seznam/>.





Figure 5 Anton Janša's preserved historical apiary with original painted beehive panels, Breznica, Slovenia

<p>Apiary using AŽ hives</p>	<p>The file states that “Apiaries represent an important part of the cultural landscape.”<sup>42</sup> This statement illustrates that dichotomies between culture and nature are false. According to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the term cultural landscape “embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment.”<sup>43</sup> Additionally, the file also mentions that “[a]rchitecturally, apiaries have developed in harmony with local conditions and beekeepers’ needs.”<sup>44</sup> Apiary construction is recognised as part of national intangible cultural heritage. Thus, in 2014, a register of Slovenian apiaries was established by the Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia (IPCHS), with the goal of</p>
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<sup>42</sup> “Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life” Nomination Form, Nomination file 01857. Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 17. COM 7.b.27, *UNESCO Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857>.

<sup>43</sup> “Cultural Heritage”, *UNESCO World Heritage Convention*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/#2>.

<sup>44</sup> “Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life” Nomination Form, Nomination file 01857. Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 17. COM 7.b.27, *UNESCO Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857>.

	<p>establishing apiaries as important parts of architectural heritage, raising the awareness of the public in the field of built heritage, preserving Slovenian originality and rising value of Slovenian culture in Europe and the world.<sup>45</sup> Currently, there are 27 protected historical apiaries. The type of hive found in these bee houses is the Anton Žnideršič (AŽ) hive. 93% of Slovenian bees live in AŽ hives.<sup>46</sup> It can be operated from the back, not from the top, which provides improved accessibility. The stacking of beehives also contributes to temperature isolation and saving of space.</p>
Associated arts and crafts	<p>Building the beehives and apiaries, candle making, honey breads and moulds for producing them, and most importantly, the painting on the beehive panels. According to the Catalogue of the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, the painted panels represent “a folk art genre...which features numerous secular figurative motifs as well as moralistic and satirical themes.”<sup>47</sup> The panels depict saints, legendary figures and animals, and thematise interpersonal situations and interactions in rural settings. More than 50,000 panels were painted up until the First World War, especially in the regions of Upper Carniola, southern Carinthia, eastern Styria and Prekmurje. Apiaries continue to be painted even today, out of respect towards the tradition.<sup>48</sup></p>
Social rituals	<p>Beekeepers regularly mingle in local associations and during national celebrations. They also come together in beekeeping choirs and have a beekeeping anthem. The nomination mentions a linguistic curiosity as well - in Slovenian, there are different words used for dying for humans and animals. The bee is the only animal which is attributed the word also used for humans.</p>
Material identity markers	<p>Festive beekeeping costumes and banners of local societies. Uniform jars and labels for Slovenian honey (the glass container is called a <i>kozarec</i> and has a Carniolan bee moulded into the bottom of the glass jars, as well as a certified sticker from the national association).</p>
Connected disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apitherapy, or use of bee products (honey, wax, pollen, royal jelly, propolis, bee venom, aerosol) for alleviation or prevention of health problems.</li> <li>• Apicultural tourism, functioning through a network of certified providers of beekeeping touristic and apitherapeutic experiences.</li> </ul>

<sup>45</sup> “Register of historical beehives,” *Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association*, last accessed 7 May 2024, [https://www.czs.si/content/E13?sif\\_co=E13](https://www.czs.si/content/E13?sif_co=E13).

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Sosič and Bojana Rogelj Škafar, *Kjer so čebele doma – Where the Bees are at Home: Exhibiton Catalogue* (Ljubljana: Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2020), 34.

<sup>47</sup> Nena Židov, *Between Nature and Culture: A guide to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum permanent exhibition* (Ljubljana: Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, 2009), 134.

<sup>48</sup> Nena Židov, *Between Nature and Culture: A guide to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum permanent exhibition* (Ljubljana: Slovene Ethnographic Museum, 2009), 134.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable development, also in connection with culture, education, apiculture, health, business.<sup>49</sup></li> <li>• Food safety</li> <li>• Culinary industry</li> <li>• Biology, chemistry, geography</li> <li>• Forestry and farming</li> <li>• Education and heritage interpretation</li> </ul>
Official safeguarding bodies	Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, Beekeeping Academy of Slovenia, Biotechnical Faculty of University of Ljubljana, GRM Novo mesto – Biotechnology and Tourism Centre, Radovljica Municipality Museums – Museum of Apiculture, Slovene Ethnographic Museum. In addition to the nomination, eighty letters of support were submitted from both Slovenian and non-Slovenian individuals and communities, such as The Consortium of Artisanry Centres of Slovenia, Professional fire unit Celje, Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, National Education Institute Slovenia, Slovenian Tourist Board, or The International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations. <sup>50</sup>
Impacts of the nomination	The expected result of the nomination is to attract new groups, encourage respect for nature, bees and beekeepers, strengthen awareness of importance of beekeeping and the benefits of locally produced food. Other goals are related to heritage interpretation, which are also in particular relevant for the context of Czech beekeeping, which focuses largely on materials heritage aspects - to raise awareness "about beekeeping as a combination of intangible knowledge, practices and their modern expressions" <sup>51</sup> . Consequently, the nomination aims to transfer knowledge of the intangible cultural heritage and spark interest in entering elements in the national register. On an international level, it "will encourage countries to develop their own expressions and practices in connecting intangible, movable and immovable heritage." <sup>52</sup>

Table 1 Elements from the "Beekeeping, a way of life" UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity nomination

<sup>49</sup> "Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life" Nomination Form, Nomination file 01857. Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 17. COM 7.b.27, *UNESCO Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857>.

<sup>50</sup> "Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life" Consent of Communities, Nomination file 01857. Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 17. COM 7.b.27, *UNESCO Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857>.

<sup>51</sup> "Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life" Nomination Form, Nomination file 01857. Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 17. COM 7.b.27, *UNESCO Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857>.

<sup>52</sup> "Beekeeping in Slovenia, a way of life" Nomination Form, Nomination file 01857. Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 17. COM 7.b.27, *UNESCO Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/beekeeping-in-slovenia-a-way-of-life-01857>.

### 2.1.3. Green Slovenia: Emergence of Apitourism and Apitherapy

After independence, Slovenia started attracting the attention of European countries by promoting Slovenian nature and heritage. Derek Hall mentions the 1990s projected self-image of the country as ‘The green piece of Europe’ and observes the way tourism was interlinked with culture to create a specific Slovenian brand. He states that “the integration of gastronomy and tourism has been pursued, reinforcing a rural-cultural emphasis and efforts to increase added value to many of Slovenia’s products”<sup>53</sup>. Since 2007, the main slogan of the country is the green and white logo “I feel Slovenia”<sup>54</sup>. We can read on the website of the government that “Slovenia cannot be encapsulated only in an image; it must be felt and experienced – through words, sounds, colours, touch and action.”<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the Slovenian Tourist Board explains that the use of colour is not accidental and is specifically tied to Slovenian natural, cultural and social environment:

In Slovenia, green is more than a colour. The ‘Slovenian green’ expresses a balance between the calmness of nature and the diligence of the Slovenian people...It symbolises a lifestyle balance that combines the pleasant excitement with which Slovenians pursue their personal desires, and the common vision of moving forward with nature. The Slovenian green colour also describes our focus on the elementary, on what we feel with our hands. The Slovenian colour green speaks of the harmony of all senses, with which one can experience Slovenia. We feel Slovenia.<sup>56</sup>

According to Zala Volčič, the “I feel Slovenia” campaign deliberately uses “traditional and modern motifs that lend it a certain sense of timelessness and connection to nature”.<sup>57</sup> Being a combination of practical hands-on manual work and at the same time modern sustainable craft, beekeeping fits into this narrative about Slovenia perfectly, and therefore the emergence and instant popularity of

<sup>53</sup> Derek Hall, “Branding and national identity: the case of Central and Eastern Europe,” in *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposal*, ed. Nigel Morgan, Annette Pritchard and Roger Pride (London: Routledge, 2004), 118.

<sup>54</sup> “Slovenia’s brand: I feel Slovenia,” *Republic of Slovenia Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://www.gov.si/en/topics/slovenias-brand-i-feel-slovenia/>.

<sup>55</sup> “Slovenia’s brand: I feel Slovenia,” *Republic of Slovenia Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://www.gov.si/en/topics/slovenias-brand-i-feel-slovenia/>.

<sup>56</sup> “I feel Slovenia – the brand of Slovenia and Slovenian tourism,” *I Feel Slovenia Website*, last accessed 20 May 2024, <https://www.slovenia.info/en/business/slovenian-tourist-board/i-feel-slovenia>.

<sup>57</sup> Zala Volčič, “Branding Slovenia: “You Can’t Spell Slovenia Without Love...,” in *Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the “New” Europe*, ed. Nadia Kaneva (New York, Routledge, 2011), 157.

apitourism and apitherapy is not surprising. The Slovenian apitouristic network describes the concept as “a fusion of green destinations, apiculture and travel.”<sup>58</sup> It explains further: “Some people call it *Natural*. Others call it *Green*. We call it *Api*. It is about authentic travel which enriches one’s life and strengthens one’s connection with nature, culture and society.”<sup>59</sup>

There are currently 45 certified providers in all parts of Slovenia, offering personalised educational beekeeping and apitherapeutical programmes through the ApiRoutes travel agency. The Slovenian Professional Guides Association also provides specialised training in cooperation with the Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association for apitouristic guides. These guides are then responsible for mediation of the apitouristic experiences. Currently, there are 37 trained guides. Metod Šuligoj notes that “one of the main characteristics of apitourism is social responsibility because it promotes understanding, social integrity and education through a unique tourist experience. [It] helps revive rural areas and preserves original culture and traditions.”<sup>60</sup> I would dispute Šuligoj’s view that this type of tourism preserves the original culture – rather, I view it as an adaptation of the traditional heritage in the context of a broader international promotion programme, oriented primarily towards a foreign gaze. Because of the assimilation to the consumer, heritage is not only a lived experience, but also a performance of sustainable ‘Green Slovenia’.

Beekeeping tourism could be interpreted as a commodification and commercialization of heritage which serves the national brand “I love Slovenia”, which in turn can be seen as a continuation of the process of nation building described in the first section of the thesis. However, there are also several benefits which this type of tourism provides to both beekeepers and visitors,

<sup>58</sup> “Apitourism,” last accessed 21 May 2024, <https://www.apiturizem.si/en/apiturizem/>.

<sup>59</sup> “Apitourism,” last accessed 21 May 2024, <https://www.apiturizem.si/en/apiturizem/>.

<sup>60</sup> Metod Šuligoj, “Origins and development of apitherapy and apitourism,” *Journal of Apicultural Research* 60, no.3 (2021), 372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00218839.2021.1874178>.

such as the interactions between different audiences, and the subsequent generation of new ideas and innovations. Additionally, the emergence of apitourism is also related to the professionalisation of apitherapy. One pioneer of this discipline was a Czech beekeeper and scientist, dr. Filip Terč, who was working in Slovenian Maribor. He was concerned with the effects of bee venom for treating rheumatism. The Society of Slovenian Apitherapists was founded relatively recently in 2014, and a training programme was developed by the Beekeepers Associations of Štajerska Region, for those who desire to integrate apitherapeutic practices into their work.<sup>61</sup> Since 2021, after the completion of the training and obtaining an official certificate from the Slovenian government, apitherapy can be practiced as a profession by individuals, who for example offer honey massages, create cosmetic products, provide expert advice related to use of bee products for health issues, allows for inhalation of aerosol in the apiary, or helps with pollen and other allergies.<sup>62</sup> Many beekeepers are becoming interested in this work, as illustrated by great interest of the international beekeeping community in the recent conference Apitherapy for Children 2024, organised by the Ljubljana-based Eneja Institute for the Development of Empathy and Creativity.

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<sup>61</sup> “Apiterapija” [Apitherapy], Beekeepers Associations of Štajerska Region Website, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://czds.si/apiterapija/>.

<sup>62</sup> “Apiterapevt/apiterapevka” [Apitherapist] National Professional Qualification Website, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://npk.si/katalogi/7514662/>.



et al. offered the following reasoning: “Ironies of history, fresh and ancient, continue to replay in the Czech lands. ‘Czechness,’ like any other characterization of nationality, is a notoriously elusive term; the very borders of the country have shrunk and expanded several times in the last century alone.”<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, I am unable to delve into the fascinating Czech history in detail in this thesis, but here simply wish to illustrate the disconnection and confusion many Czechs experience after imposition of radically different political agendas and identities in the last century. It is my hypothesis that embodying detachment from our complicated national history poses barriers to forming communities around heritage, including beekeeping heritage, and results in a sense of alienation.

In the first section I would like to highlight several moments in history that made and unmade the identity of Czech people and consider the effects these nation-building processes have had on the present understanding of the past and formulations of heritage, including beekeeping heritage. In the following subchapter, I wish to briefly recall some episodes from Czech beekeeping history to demonstrate that there has been a continuous presence of bees in the Czech lands, which remains in the shadow of narratives of industrialisation and technological advancement. Finally, I assume hope for reclaiming this heritage (and the intangible heritage of other crafts and disciplines) through evoking some Czech movements and organisations which have promoted natural protection and ecological awareness for decades, and which reflect the strong connection between Czech people, their nature and their land.

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<sup>64</sup> Jan Bažant, Nina Bažantová and Frances Starn, *The Czech Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

### 2.2.1. Renegotiation and Construction of the Czech Identity and Consequences for Remembering Heritage

Ancient Bohemia was home to pagan Celtic and Germanic tribes, and in the ninth century to the Great Christian Moravian Empire. The *Chronica Boemorum*, the oldest historiographical record ideologically assisting the authority of the Czech nation and emergence of a Czech identity, was written by Cosmas of Prague in the early twelfth century. The chronicle described the arrival of Father Czech to these lands, recounted the myth of Libuše and her prophecy for Prague becoming the prosperous capital and celebrated the consequent reign of the Přemyslid Dynasty. It was a foundational text for later chroniclers and writers. A short walk in the Prague city centre shows the seminal role Charles IV, the son of Jan Lucemburský and Eliška of Přemyslid Dynasty, played in defining the future national consciousness of the nation. This process of becoming a nation is still underway and remains unresolved in Czech consciousness, due to the plethora of defining historical events and political regimes that took place following the reign of Charles IV. According to Jiří Brodský, the Czech identity “had been in a constant transformation, constantly questioned, developing discontinuously, as something that had been suffering from continuous incompleteness and a lack of finality.”<sup>65</sup> More than a section in this thesis would be necessary to properly explain and analyse these processes in depth. Yet, thanks to scholars which contributed to understanding of the topic of Czech history and identity, such as Ladislav Holý and Radek Chlup, I can at least briefly summarize these constant renegotiations and their effects on the understanding of cultural past and heritage.

The Hussite movement was undeniably influential in formulations of identity during the period of national revival and socialism and was portrayed as emblematic for the “Czech national

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<sup>65</sup> Jiří Brodský, “Czech Identity and Returning to Europe,” *Sien Quarterly* 1-2 (2003-2004), 12. [http://www.publikon.hu/application/essay/276\\_2.pdf](http://www.publikon.hu/application/essay/276_2.pdf).



struggle” of the following centuries.<sup>66</sup> In his work *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*, František Palacký, the so-called ‘Father of the Nation’, ascribed the Hussite movement ideals of cultural unity, and described the Hussite revolt as a revolutionary movement standing up for their ‘Czechness’. He is one of the leading figures of the national revival of the nineteenth century, during which national identity was formulated in opposition to imposed German values, culture, and language of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The role of Czech cultural history of was emphasised and according to Hájek and Hlavačka, “they revived the language, advanced literary and artistic activities, formed their own political representation with a defining political culture, nationalized education, self-government and some business branches.”<sup>67</sup> John F. N. Bradley states that “Palacký not only understood the importance of a national symbol for a nationalist struggle, but also elevated this historical symbol to the current intellectual and philosophic level by proclaiming Hus and his followers defenders of conscience against tyrannical authority.”<sup>68</sup> Radek Chlup describes Palacký’s depiction of the Hussites as “precursors...of modern democracy...thus providing the Czech nation with deep spiritual and modern roots.”<sup>69</sup> The influence of this image was powerful and was recalled in Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk’s conception of the First Republic. Chlup observes the reformulation of the founding myth after the communist coup in 1948. According to him, Zdeněk Nejedlý, the first communist Minister of Culture and Education, believed that “the Czech people amounted to the proletariat who had long been exploited...In the

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<sup>66</sup> Hussites were followers of Jan Hus who protested against the moral decline of the Catholic church in 15<sup>th</sup> century, who was eventually burnt at the Council of Constance. They were dissatisfied with the increasing secularisation and political power of the Church. This conflict resulted in the Hussite Wars which took place between 1419 and 1434.

<sup>67</sup> Jan Hájek and Milan Hlavačka, “The Birth of the Modern Czech Nation (1792-1848) in *A History of the Czech Lands*, ed. Jaroslav Pánek and Oldřich Tůma (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2009), 301.

<sup>68</sup> John F. N. Bradley, *Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 92.

<sup>69</sup> Radek Chlup, “Competing myths of Czech identity,” *New Perspectives* 28, no.2 (May 2020), 186. Last accessed 23 May 2024, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2336825X20911817>.



same vein, the Hussites were glorified as proto-communist revolutionaries.”<sup>70</sup> The Hussite movement is an example of a past memory which was interpreted and reinterpreted anachronistically, from the point of view of the present. One which defined a nation, and which was later appropriated by a totalitarian political regime. Arguably, this process of interpretation is always ongoing to a certain extent. However, during the socialist period in the Czech Republic, denial or disagreement with the official interpretation of the cultural and political past and present could end in repression and persecution. I believe that Czechs are still suspicious of the idea of national heritage and community because of the abuse of these concepts during socialism.

Since the 1989 Velvet Revolution, during which Czechs protested against the Communist rule, which eventually disintegrated, and the consequent dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992, the Czech nation has undergone another identity reconstruction and renegotiation, focusing on becoming part of the European Union. Values of freedom and independence were emphasised with little understanding of what they mean for the Czechs in a post-socialist newly democratic space. Carol Skalník Leff comments on the lack of Czech nationalism in the late twentieth century: “If the concept of ‘us’ requires a ‘them,’ then certainly it also requires an ‘us’, a sense of national self. It is in this respect that the Czechs had presented something of a conundrum to specialists on the region as well as to the Czechs themselves.”<sup>71</sup> The old socialist ideas of the East were quickly replaced by the new European Western agendas. In fact, we can see a similar process as Slovenia encountered with Yugoslavia, of distancing themselves from the history they were part of (although I wish to emphasize that these histories varied significantly) which was described by the anthropologist Ladislav Holý as follows: “Czech use the concept of ‘culture’ [kulturnost] to

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<sup>70</sup> Chlup, 188.

<sup>71</sup> Carol Skalník Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 28. The [them] was often formulated as German presence in the Czech lands, which is also observed by Skalník Leff.

construct a boundary between themselves and the uncultured East into which they were lumped after the communist coup d'état in 1948, and they see their proper place as alongside the civilised, cultures, and educated nations of Western Europe.”<sup>72</sup> I do not want to reinforce the discourse of Czechs as mere suffering victims of external circumstances, but want to illustrate the quick transition in the mindset society needed to adopt, leaving little space to integrate experiences of Communism into national consciousness. An ambiguous relationship to the past and present selves is embodied by Czechs, which was best described by Holý in *The Little Czech and The Great Czech Nation*. His extensive study on post-communist social transformation can be summed up in the following sentence: “Czechs see themselves as envious, resentful, conformist, cunning, and egoistic and yet consider themselves to be members of an inherently democratic nation in which they take distinct pride.”<sup>73</sup>

To reinstate the question posed by Czechoslovak philosopher Jan Patočka in his famous essay, *Who are the Czechs?* Or more importantly for this thesis, *Who are the Czech beekeepers?* How do they relate to the traditions of the craft which they practice? Despite the rich history of beekeeping in the Czech lands, it was one of the agricultural industries partially controlled by the Communist State and regulated by the five-year production plan. Beekeeping schools were established during this time to train beekeepers, who were forced to refocus their attention on the material output of their activity. This is imprinted on the way both policy makers and practitioners approach bees, and something I believe needs to be addressed in future beekeeping transmission projects.

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<sup>72</sup> Ladislav Holý, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National identity and the post-communist social transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 51. The author uses the Czech word *kulturnost*, which I translated in this citation as culture. The literal meaning of the inflected word he uses would be the ability or capacity for culture.

<sup>73</sup> Holý, 77.

### 2.2.2. The Art of Forgetting: Episodes from the Czech Beekeeping History

In *Chronica Boemorum*, Cosmas of Prague, portrays the land found by Father Czech as “a land subject to no one, land filled with game and birds, wet with sweet milk and honey, and as you can see, its climate [...] pleasant to live in.”<sup>74</sup> Bees are intertwined with Cosmas’ narrative of Bohemian settlement, and have stayed close companions to Czechs over later centuries. However, these histories were largely backgrounded in the process of socialist mass industrialisation and agriculturalisation of the twentieth century. The main Czech beekeeping encyclopaedia written by Vladimír Veselý et al. is entirely dedicated to bee biology and beekeeping technology and omits any historical references or sources which would hint at the history of the practice in the Czech lands, except for the introductory page written by Miroslav Peroutka from Czech Beekeepers’ Association, where he in one sentence mentions 19<sup>th</sup> century establishing of beekeepers’ associations.<sup>75</sup> Tomáš Drobný, the director of the Methodical Centre of Museum Pedagogy in Brno, recognises that “in the Czech environment, the idea of discontinuity is not only historical, but also artistic and generally cultural phenomenon.”<sup>76</sup> He attributes it to “technical civilization which supports innovation...[and] emphasizes originality and individuality.”<sup>77</sup> I agree with Drobný’s notion that lack of established continuity complicates relationship to past and heritage. There are similar trends observable in relation to beekeeping, which I will explore later in regard to Czech beekeeping heritage transmission. In this section, I refer to sources which speak of

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<sup>74</sup> *The Czech Reader*, 20.

<sup>75</sup> Vladimír Veselý et al., *Včelařství* [Beekeeping] (Praha: Brázda, 2021), 3-4.

<sup>76</sup> Tomáš Drobný, “Kulturní dědictví a paměťové instituce z pohledu muzejní pedagogiky” [Cultural heritage and memory institutions from the point of view of museum pedagogy] in *Culture, Art and Education: Selection of Texts 2013-2016*, ed. Petra Šobánková and Květoslava Musilová (Olomouc: INSEA, 2018), 43. Last accessed 19 May 2024, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336020876>. My own translation.

<sup>77</sup> Drobný, 42.

beekeeping history, with hopes of foregrounding some aspects of this tradition which have been forgotten.

According to Kebrle, the earliest records of trade with beekeeping products, specifically honey, wax and mead, come from the tenth and eleventh century. The founding decree of the Břevnov Monastery in Prague published in 993 by Duke Boleslav II. states that each year, monks are to receive honey and wax which can be used for candle and votive manufacture.<sup>78</sup> In 1348, the Old Town of Prague became home to eighteen gingerbread makers from Nuremberg, who cooperated with the local beekeepers.<sup>79</sup> In rural areas, beekeepers who did not own their land or practiced wild foraging of honey in the forest were required to pay fees to the landowner, otherwise their bees were taken away. The earliest set of statutes and regulations (so-called *artikule*) of the beekeepers' guild come from 1570-1578, showing that beekeepers formed professional associations as early as sixteenth century.<sup>80</sup> Kebrle observes that beekeeping in the Czech lands significantly declined as a result of Hussite and Thirty-Year Wars, as villages were destroyed and people became poor and oppressed.<sup>81</sup> Kebrle calls the reign of Maria Theresa and the era of Austro-Hungarian Empire "the golden age of beekeeping"<sup>82</sup>. In 1775, she published a patent which exempted beekeepers from paying taxes and established beekeeping schools in Nový Knín taught by Jan Hallmann and in Brno, by Jan Span.<sup>83</sup> In 1852, beekeeper Jan Dzierzon from Silesia set up the first local association of beekeepers, and twenty years later in 1872, the first national beekeepers' society was founded in Prague, which eventually developed into the Czech Beekeepers' Association.

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<sup>78</sup> Kebrle, 23.

<sup>79</sup> Kebrle, 22.

<sup>80</sup> Kebrle, 28.

<sup>81</sup> Kebrle, 44.

<sup>82</sup> Kebrle, 47.

<sup>83</sup> Kebrle, 49.

### 2.2.3. Nature Protection and Sustainability in the Czech Republic – The Potential for Reclaiming the Czech Beekeeping Heritage

Czechs are avid hikers, gardeners, and nature lovers. Many people living in cities moved from more rural areas, and often visit their relatives in the countryside. People leave the city for the weekends and holidays. It is therefore not surprising that the Czech Republic has a structured system of care for its natural environment in place, with the most central agent being the Ministry of the Environment and its sister organisation, the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic. A logo and introduction on the website of the Agency tells us that “Nature is our heritage and future: We are a state institution which provides specialist practical care for our nature and landscape, protecting our mutual heritage.”<sup>84</sup> The main legislative element which is guiding care for the environment is Law no.144/1992 Sb., which in its article 14 distinguishes the legally protected areas as national parks, nature conservation areas, reservations, and natural monuments.<sup>85</sup> Several parts of the document are dedicated to bird conservation and protection of endangered animals, however, bees are not part of these texts. There are many organisations protecting the environment and raising awareness regarding climate change and animal extinction. Besides the Foundation Partnership which I speak about in this section, we can mention Brontosaurus, Duha or the Universities for the Climate movement.

In its own expression, Foundation Partnership “helps people and communities to assume responsibility for care for the environment.”<sup>86</sup> Since 1991, the foundation has been able to support various projects connected to sustainability and environmental awareness, as well as mitigation of

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<sup>84</sup> “About Us,” *Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic Website*, last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://www.nature.cz/o-nas>.

<sup>85</sup> “Law no.114/1992 Sb.,” *Laws for People Website*, last accessed 19 May 2024, <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1992-114>.

<sup>86</sup> “Foundation Partnership – About Us,” *Foundation Partnership*, last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz/O-nas>.

the effects of climate change. One of the most successful projects was the 2015 transformation of a waste dump site in the centre of Brno into an open garden which houses a community garden, fruit trees, sheep, and bees. Initially the site was home to two bee families, but in 2021, the foundation initiated a crowdfunding campaign to extend their so-called ‘Bee Kingdom’ by raising 80 000 Czech crowns for six observatory beehives, raised flowerbeds with melliferous plants and new benches for visitors.<sup>87</sup> The project was successful and 148% of the monetary goal was achieved, surpassing the initial expectations and showcasing support of the public. The foundation also developed several projects related to biodiversity and trees, such as *Tree of the Year*, a national photographic competition which brings attention to protection of nature in an entertaining and engaging manner, utilizing images and storytelling. It complements the Czech environmental law no. 114/1992 which recognizes so-called “heritage trees”, whose organic developments are protected for their natural, historical, cultural, spiritual, and social values, according to the website of the Agency for Protection of Nature and Landscape of the Czech Republic<sup>88</sup>. This can be an example of a conservation practice that Blicharska and Mikusinski understand as framed from a human perspective, as it “take[s] into account not only ecological functions of nature, but also the benefits [large old trees] provide to people.”<sup>89</sup> A similar approach must be adopted in understanding and transmitting beekeeping heritage and should become part of agenda for Ministries of Environment, Culture, and Tourism. We must look beyond the products which beekeeping offers and appreciate the social and cultural benefits telling stories about bees can bring

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<sup>87</sup> “Včely zblízka v Otevřené zahradě” [Bees Up Close in Open Garden], *Darujme.cz*, published 15 March 2021, last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://www.darujme.cz/projekt/1204380#informace>.

<sup>88</sup> “Heritage Trees,” *Website of Agency for Protection of Nature and Landscape of the Czech Republic*, last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://nature.cz/pamatne-stromy>.

<sup>89</sup> Malgorzata Blicharska and Grzegorz Mikusinski, “Incorporating Social and Cultural Significance of Large Old Trees in Conservation Policy,” *Conservation Biology* 28, no.6 (December 2014): 1563. JSTOR: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24482119>, last accessed 17 May 2024.

to Czech society. In this way, we can co-create more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable futures.

### **3. Infrastructure of Slovenian Beekeeping Heritage Transmission: International, National and Local Presentations of the Tangible and Intangible Beekeeping Heritage**

The website of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association tells us that beekeeping is “the poetry of agriculture.”<sup>90</sup> This shows a lot about how beekeeping is perceived, celebrated, and idealized among all Slovenians. In the first chapter, I illustrated how heritage was used in the processes of nationalisation and of Slovenian identity building, and how beekeeping continues to function as an agent for strengthening of Slovenian national brand in the present. In this chapter, I will look at different programmes which transmit this tradition on international, national and regional levels through different educational and promotional programmes. The goal of all these is to promote environmental diversity, but more importantly, to also strengthen, reinforce and give visibility to Slovenian cultural identity. It is clear from the first chapter that Slovenians are actively in touch with their beekeeping history and practice, but what initiatives continue to contribute to this situation? What presentations of beekeeping are offered in international, national and local contexts and what kinds of narratives about human interaction with bees and the environment are being reflected and developed in the process? It is my purpose in this chapter to understand the central elements of the stories about beekeeping as developed by the institutions which I outline in the next paragraph. However, it is important to note that this chapter cannot cover many other ways beekeeping heritage is mediated to different groups of people living in Slovenia, all of which are equally, if not more, significant for such heritage transmission. These more personal

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<sup>90</sup> “About”, *Slovenian Beekeepers' Association*, last accessed 7 May 2024, [https://en.czs.si/?sif\\_file=wp&sif\\_parent](https://en.czs.si/?sif_file=wp&sif_parent).

mediations include, but are not limited to kindergartens, primary schools, university courses and programmes, literatures, national training programmes for beginning beekeepers, individual beekeepers who unite in their local communities and societies, which often also offer educational opportunities for their members and families, radio shows and songs, markets and celebrations, or even a sensation of seeing an apiary during a mountain hike, or a plate engraved with a beehive panel motif in a pottery shop. I focus on the institutionally based presentations of beekeeping heritage to illustrate their presence on international, national, and local levels of Slovenian heritage management infrastructure.

First, I explore two international initiatives developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, namely the World Bee Day and the Slovenian Beekeeping Academy. In the next part, I look at two educational activities of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, specifically the Traditional Honey Breakfast and the Day of Planting Honey Plants, and in the last section inspect various beekeeping tangible and intangible heritage musealisation projects by analysing the displays in Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica and the House of Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora. Each of these projects targets a different audience and operates with a different motivation in mind. Often, they are in interaction with one another. I undertake this analysis to see what aspects of beekeeping are emphasized in these transmissions, and for which type of audience it is created, to learn more about development of educational programme related to beekeeping heritage, with hopes of creating a plan for a Bee Path in Prague. I acknowledge that these presentations stem from a specific historical context which is not present in the Czech Republic, or anywhere else. However, by comparing and contrasting the Slovenian presentations with the Czech presentations in the next chapter, it should be possible to uncover valuable insights into the two different beekeeping cultures and discover what they can learn from each other in



order to create a holistic and relevant specific educational programme for Czech beekeeping which will constitute the last chapter. In addition to reviewing the available material relevant to the different beekeeping heritage presentations on the internet, I was able to conduct a series of personal interviews and visits in April 2023, observing a relatively comprehensive overview of these activities.

### 3.1 Slovenian Beekeeping Without Borders: Ministry of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs of Slovenia

The garden of the Slovenian Embassy in Prague surprises the visitor with a small apiary with two traditional AŽ hives, inhabited by around 120 000 Carniolan bees.<sup>91</sup> I heard about this phenomenon on the 16th of May 2023 on the rooftop of the Agricultural Museum in Prague, where the Slovenian Ambassador spoke about the importance of pollinators and the significance of Slovenian beekeeping on the occasion of the 6th International World Bee Day. The event was attended by the Czech Minister of Agriculture, the vice president of International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations, dr. Peter Kozmus, or the Czech ambassador to the United Nations. I was invited to conduct a workshop on the life cycle of Carniolan bee for a group of young children from a local international kindergarten, and for the opening of an exhibition which was organised by the Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica and the Agricultural Museum in Prague. The Slovenian government promotes the importance of biodiversity and pollinators through advertisement of their national beekeeping heritage. The website of the government states that “Slovenia is actively involved in integrating pollinators into environmental policies and in addressing global food

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<sup>91</sup> Tanja Strniša and Anton Strniša, “Bees are our friends. Let’s appreciate them more.” *Czech and Slovak Leaders*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://www.czechleaders.com/posts/bees-are-our-friends-lets-appreciate-them-more>.

security concerns through bee diplomacy.”<sup>92</sup> A description of how beekeeping can be used internationally between states is described by MedBEESiness Hubs Project, showcasing the political soft power of heritage: “Bee diplomacy refers to the use of beekeeping and bee-related initiatives as a tool for fostering international relations, promoting environmental sustainability, and enhancing economic development.”<sup>93</sup> This phenomenon is an example of heritage diplomacy, a more general concept developed by Tim Winter and further defined by Čeginskas and Lähdesmäki as both “key for building lasting relationships between people and communities within and across state borders” and “a political and diplomatic tool in establishing international relations by underpinning the ability of heritage to create exclusion, division, and hierarchical power relations.”<sup>94,95</sup> In this section, I will look at two instances of Slovenian bee diplomacy, by parsing the presentations aimed at an international audience. Whilst the World Bee Day and the Slovenian Beekeeping Academy promote beekeeping, they are mainly promoting the status and power of Slovenia and its heritage. In a keynote speech by the President Nataša Pirc Musar at the national ceremony marking 150 years of organised beekeeping in Slovenia, she also highlighted international initiatives and cooperations, calling Slovenia “a beekeeping superpower”<sup>96</sup>. In this chapter, let us look at why this image was chosen and how it is achieved and maintained.

### 3.1.1 World Bee Day

<sup>92</sup> “6<sup>th</sup> World Bee Day: Bee diplomacy for environmental and social resilience,” *Ministry of Foreign and European Website*, published 17 May 2023, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://www.gov.si/en/news/2023-05-17-sesti-svetovni-dan-cebel-cebelja-diplomacija-za-okoljsko-in-druzbeno-odpornost>.

<sup>93</sup> “Ever heard of ‘Bee diplomacy’?” *ENI CBCMED Cooperating across borders in the Mediterranean*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://www.enicbcmmed.eu/ever-heard-bee-diplomacy-read-medbeesinesshubs-team>.

<sup>94</sup> Tim Winter, “Heritage Diplomacy,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21, no.10 (2015): 997-1015, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2015.1041412>.

<sup>95</sup> Viktorija L.A. Čeginskas and Tuuli Lähdesmäki, “Introduction: reflecting on heritage diplomacy,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 29, no.1 (2023): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2022.2141730>.

<sup>96</sup> “Slovenia is a world power in beekeeping,” *President of the Republic of Slovenia Website*, published 30 September 2023, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://www.predsednica-slo.si/en/news/slovenia-is-a-world-power-in-beekeeping/>.

The project World Bee Day was conceived in 2014 by the President of Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, Boštjan Noč, becoming what the Slovenian journalist Katja Križnar calls “our mission”<sup>97</sup>. 20 May, the birthdate of the first professional Slovenian teacher of beekeeping, Anton Janša, was chosen to be the day during which nations celebrate bees. I will first look at the presentations introduced in the early stages of the nomination process and then at some present perceptions of this holiday. The idea was endorsed by the Ministry of Agriculture and the President and adopted in 2015 as an initiative of the Slovenian government. Subsequently, it was presented to and supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. A series of roundtables was held in 2016, with the foci of the beekeeping heritage presentation being the ideas of community and potential uses for creating sustainable futures - they were titled “20 May, World Bee Day - an opportunity for all”, “Bees and sustainable development” and “World Bee Day: To Bee or Not to Bee.”<sup>98</sup> “Diplomats help build buzz over World Bee Day,”<sup>99</sup> reads the headline of a United Nations news article from 2017. It refers to the efforts of Slovenian government officials and beekeepers to get the United Nations in New York to get their proposal for the celebration of a World Bee Day approved, which were ultimately successful. The article features an interview with the Slovenian Ambassador, Darja Bavdaz Kuret, who not only describes the nature of beekeeping in Slovenia, but also mentions the positive impacts of caring for bees on the implementation of the Global Sustainable Goals, such as food security, reduction of poverty and biodiversity.<sup>100</sup> Peter Kozmus, a beekeeper who was also involved in the UN negotiations,

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<sup>97</sup> Katja Križnar, “World Bee Day is considered Slovenia’s mission,” *I Feel Slovenia* Website, published 19 December 2019, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://slovenia.si/art-and-cultural-heritage/world-bee-day-is-considered-slovenias-mission/>.

<sup>98</sup> “About the World Bee Project,” *Republic of Slovenia Website*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://www.gov.si/en/registries/projects/world-bee-day/about/>.

<sup>99</sup> “Diplomats help build buzz over World Bee Day,” *UN News Website*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2017/10/634662>.

<sup>100</sup> “Diplomats help build buzz over World Bee Day,” *UN News Website*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2017/10/634662>.

describes that when he returned to Slovenia, crowds were cheering and waving the national flag, “as if we were heroes...like we were athletes returning with gold medals.”<sup>101</sup> In efforts to get the proposal approved, beekeeping heritage was presented as something universal, something that connects us and that has power to combat detrimental effects of climate change.

It is possible that the proposal would also have been accepted if it had been made by another country, because humans are indeed dependent on bees for crops and sustainable futures. However, what enabled it in this case was the authority of the Slovenian beekeeping tradition discourse, rooted in a strong national and individual beekeeping identity among the citizens of Slovenia. Reciprocally, the coining and international acclaim of World Bee Day further reinforced the strength of Slovenian beekeeping heritage. During the 6th celebration of the World Bee Day in 2023 in Celje, Boštjan Noč confirmed this: “Bees and beekeepers inspire respect in Slovenia. Hundreds of events take place around the world today to honour bees and pollinators, and Slovenia leads the way in this respect. We can be truly proud of this.”<sup>102</sup> We can see that for foreign audiences, beekeeping is presented as common to humanity, but amongst Slovenians, the uniqueness of Slovenian beekeeping is emphasized when speaking about World Bee Day. It could be argued this reinforces national consciousness and connection to the tradition. This is also inherently inscribed within the date which belongs to Anton Janša. In conclusion, the promotion campaign was successful, as both individuals and organizations relate to bees on a personal level and link their activity and well-being to human health and environmental future. Most of the

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<sup>101</sup> Méliissa Godin, “The Bee Whisperers of Slovenia Have a Plan to Save Colonies From Climate Change,” *Time.com*, published 6 May 2020, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://time.com/5815141/slovenia-bees-climate-change/>.

<sup>102</sup>“Irena Šinko: ‘I am proud to be part of this story and to come from Slovenia – home of the Carniolan honey bee’,” *Republic of Slovenia Website*, published 20 May 2023, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://www.gov.si/en/news/2023-05-20-irena-sinko-i-am-proud-to-be-part-of-this-story-and-to-come-from-slovenia-home-of-the-carniolan-honey-bee/>.

projects described in this section were introduced in support, or as a result of, the establishment of World Bee Day.

### 3.1.2 Teaching Slovenian Beekeeping Abroad: The Slovenian Beekeeping Academy

The Slovenian Academy was established after approval of World Bee Day in 2018 by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia as a part of the programme of the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia, a leading research institution in the area. Due to the limited resources, I conducted an interview with the director of the Academy, dr. Valentina Cvjetković, in April 2023, to find out more about the values and principles behind the programme. The mission of the Academy is formulated as “a dissemination of new knowledge in the national and international context in connection with beekeeping research and development.”<sup>103</sup> It was founded “with the goal of transferring Slovenian beekeeping knowledge, competencies, and practices to other countries.”<sup>104</sup> The programme connects beekeepers, representatives from ministries of education, foreign affairs and agriculture, and researchers from University of Ljubljana and University of Maribor. It can be inferred that whilst it is a programme oriented towards professional international connection through beekeeping, an inherent part of the programme is the promotion and transmission of Slovenian national heritage in front of a foreign audience. The Academy conducted projects in cooperation with Bangladesh, Banja Luka, Macedonia, Iran and the US. The topics promoted in relation to beekeeping depend on the focus and technology possessed by the project partner country, and they span from effects of beekeeping on mental health, food safety or the environment

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<sup>103</sup> “About Beekeeping Academy of Slovenia,” *Slovenian Agricultural Institute – Slovenian Beekeeping Academy Website*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://sca.kis.si/en/about-us/>.

<sup>104</sup> “About Beekeeping Academy of Slovenia,” *Slovenian Agricultural Institute – Slovenian Beekeeping Academy Website*, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://sca.kis.si/en/about-us/>.

to queen bee breeding and AŽ hive technologies, which are important parts of Slovenian beekeeping tradition, as presented in the first chapter.

In cooperation with the organisations ITF Enhancing Human Security and the Amputee Organisation UDAS, the Academy created a project called *Beekeeping as an empowerment tool for people with disabilities from Bosnia and Herzegovina*. ITF recognizes beekeeping for “its enormous opportunities for empowering the personal lives of these individuals.”<sup>105</sup> According to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the training of the Academy for non-Slovenian beekeepers follows four main techniques: training the trainers, peer-to-peer education, problem-based modules (dedicated to bee health, food safety, technologies, marketing of apicultural products, promotion of biodiversity, and bee tourism), and linking practice with science.<sup>106</sup> A beekeeping centre for victims of landmines was opened in Banja Luka in 2023, “encouraging social activities, facilitating mutual assistance and cooperation, and providing workshops on beeswax-candle-making for women.”<sup>107</sup> An article on the website of the Academy provides a complementary description, focusing on the “efficiency, effectiveness and profitability of beekeeping practice.”<sup>108</sup> The “Education” section has four main sections: apitourism, queen breeding and selection, beekeeping with AŽ hives, and guidelines for good hygiene habits in beekeeping. The focus seems to be on Slovenian innovations and technologies. Cvjetković highlights that flexibility and creativity are also part of the tradition and calls Janša an innovator.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>105</sup> “Beekeeping As a Way of Empowering Mine Victims,” *ITF Enhancing Human Security Website*, published 13 July 2021, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://www.itf.si/news/beekeeping-as-a-way-of-empowering-mine-victims>.

<sup>106</sup> Good Beekeeping Practices for Sustainable Apiculture, *The Food and Agriculture Organization Website*, Rome, 2021, <https://www.fao.org/3/cb53535en/cb53535en.pdf>.

<sup>107</sup> “Beekeeping Centre for Mine/UXO Survivors Opens in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *ITF Enhancing Human Security Website*, published 29 March 2023, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://www.itf.si/news/beekeeping-centre-for-mineuxo-survivors-opens-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina>.

<sup>108</sup> “Beekeeping center for landmine victims,” *Slovenian Beekeeping Academy Website*, published 29 March 2023, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://sca.kis.si/en/beekeeping-center-for-landmine-victims/>.

<sup>109</sup> Personal interview conducted with Valentina Cvjetković, the director of the Slovenian Beekeeping Academy, April 2023.

In this project, the transmission is focused on the beneficiary psychosocial and economic effects, presenting beekeeping as a profitable and healing practice. Whilst this may be true for the groups involved in the project, the effect of self-sufficiency is not experienced by everyone due to diminishing forage as a consequence of climate change. In fact, as mentioned earlier, only 3% in Slovenia work as professional beekeepers while the rest only engage in beekeeping as a hobby. The presentation, however, does not acknowledge these environmental and social changes and focuses primarily on the positive psychosocial effects of beekeeping and the promotion of Slovenian technologies and guidelines.

### 3.2 Nation of Beekeepers: Educational Activities of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association

Slovenian Beekeepers' Association was established in 1873 and currently unites 207 regional beekeeping associations. There are 212 municipalities, so it means that each has its own society uniting beekeepers. Each society has their own flag which illustrates strong regional identity. However, they are also united on a national level through their common heritage, beekeeping hymn, linguistic register, and legislations everyone adheres to. I will focus more specifically on two initiatives which were originally developed by the SBA and adapted primarily on a regional level but have since changed into national and international initiatives. These are short, but they are illustrative of how intersections of beekeeping heritage with culinary heritage or biodiversity are used for speaking about food security and climate change. Whilst the first initiative was developed prior to the World Bee Day proposal, the second was introduced only after its implementation.

#### 3.2.1 Traditional Honey Breakfast

The annual traditional honey breakfast event was first developed by the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association in 2007. Eric Hobsbawm's concept of 'invented tradition' comes to mind when examining the history and development of this initiative. In his account, it is "a set of practices...of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."<sup>110</sup> The educational-promotional campaign is directed towards children in the kindergartens and primary school with a primary goal to raise environmental consciousness, increase positive attitude towards bees and number of children participating in regional beekeeping clubs, as well as an increase of the honey and wax consumption.<sup>111</sup> In 2011, the event was adopted by the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture and introduced on a national level. It also changed its name and transformed into the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast, which promoted local food sourcing and consumption of honey, as it served local bread, apples, honey and milk in about 800 schools and kindergartens.<sup>112</sup>

### 3.2.2 Day of Planting Honey Plants

According to the Environmental Performance Index, Slovenia is the seventh most effective country in terms of its performance. Additionally, it ranks second place in the category of Ecosystem Vitality.<sup>113</sup> According to the Biodiversity System of Europe, 40.5% of land are covered by protected areas, which is well above the European average of 26.4%.<sup>114</sup> Biodiversity and number of natural areas are at a high level. Yet, also because the number of beekeepers is rising,

<sup>110</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983):1.

<sup>111</sup> "European Honey Breakfast," *Slovenian Beekeepers' Association Website*, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://en.czs.si/european-honey-breakfast/>.

<sup>112</sup> "Projekt Tradicionalni slovenski zajtrk," *Republic of Slovenia Website*, published 11 November 2019, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://www.nasasuperhrana.si/tradicionalni-slovenski-zajtrk/o-projektu/projekt/>.

<sup>113</sup> "Slovenia," *Environmental Performance Index Website*, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2022/country/svn>.

<sup>114</sup> "Slovenia," *Biodiversity: Information System for Europe Website*, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/countries/slovenia>.



new initiatives are being developed to further increase the richness of the land in order to provide bees with enough forage and pastures. The goal of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association is to plant two million autochthonous melliferous plants by 2030, under the project initiated in 2021 called Day of Planting Honey Plants, which annually falls on the last Sunday of March. In an official letter written as an appeal towards the Slovenian regional beekeeping societies, the plan is described more in depth: "We want our future generations to be able to enjoy the beauty of nature, which is the reason behind our initiative. With this project, the Slovenian beekeepers will move from words to action...With this noble activity, we will take care of our honeybees and other pollinators together and ensure new food sources for their development by planting honey trees and other honey plants."<sup>115</sup> The letter ends with a call to the world to also participate in this endeavour. There are many letters of support for this initiative stored on the website stores from both local and foreign beekeeping societies. The concept of intergenerational equity and the debt of nature owed to the younger generation resonates with the topics of ecological anxiety and the detrimental effects of climate change on the environment. Beekeeping is depicted as a weapon combatting the consequences of human expansion, so then the planting honey plants which sustains the practice is described as "noble" and is associated with personal empowerment and collective responsibility for the future. Much like with the previous initiative, the letters of support promise involvement of kindergartens and local cultural and political centres in the celebration of the day. The reaction letters show what the audience responds to. The concept of next generations and preservation of nature seem to be the most important themes: "A brilliant project that will help

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<sup>115</sup> "Slovenian Bee Forage Planting Day 2022," *Slovenian Beekeepers' Association Website*, last accessed 24 May 2024, [https://www.czs.si/content/dansajenja\\_eng](https://www.czs.si/content/dansajenja_eng).

the bees and people. A project to support the future of our children.”<sup>116</sup>; “We would be so pleased to join your call for planting honey plants. In fact, Asia and our country of Iran also needs to plant new bee forage trees and plants to help save the environment and our pollinators.”<sup>117</sup>

### 3.3 Musealisation of Beekeeping Heritage: Presentation of Bees in Radovljica, Višnja Gora and Ljubljana

Museums can also be important agents in transmission of heritage. According to the 2022 ICOM definition, [museum(s)] functions as “a permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage.”<sup>118</sup> In the case of Slovenian beekeeping, museums also ensure promotion of the relationships between nature and rural ways of life, that play seminal roles in combating climate change and in changing unsustainable social and environmental presents. The purpose of this section is to look at two different presentations of Slovenian beekeeping heritage through the lens of two museums to understand which characteristics of the practice are being emphasized in telling the stories of bees and beekeepers. In other words, this section analyses different interactions of museum institutions with the authorised heritage discourse of Slovenian beekeeping - the reinforcing, renegotiating, deconstructing, and questioning of the national identity and tradition which was presented in the first chapter. I want to understand the historical and social contexts these institutions operate within and look at the narratives about beekeeping which are being developed within their presentations.

<sup>116</sup> Alina Varadi, “Support for planting honey plants,” *Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association Website*, published 24 January 2022, last accessed 24 May 2024, [https://www.czs.si/Admin/load.php?sif\\_ob=36&sif\\_file=objave\\_podrobno&sif\\_parent=12146](https://www.czs.si/Admin/load.php?sif_ob=36&sif_file=objave_podrobno&sif_parent=12146).

<sup>117</sup> “Support for planting honey plants by Beekeepers’ Association Iran,” *Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association Website*, published 13 December 2021, last accessed 24 May 2024, [https://www.czs.si/Admin/load.php?sif\\_ob=36&sif\\_file=objave\\_podrobno&sif\\_parent=12030](https://www.czs.si/Admin/load.php?sif_ob=36&sif_file=objave_podrobno&sif_parent=12030).

<sup>118</sup> “Museum definition,” *International Council of Museum Website*, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>.

Slovenian interest in nature and beekeeping history is illustrated not only by the high number of beekeepers, but also by the number of public and private beekeeping collections. As confirmed by Suat Akyürek, who pulled together a list of 20 beekeeping museums worldwide, Slovenia is not the only place with beekeeping museums and centres.<sup>119</sup> It is however arguably the richest, as this small country is home to three big museum institutions which are concerned with beekeeping, and many other regional educational centres and private collections and displays. This chapter will be focused on the heritage presentations of the Beekeeping Museum in Radovljica and the House of the Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora, two public institutions entirely dedicated to beekeeping safeguarding and promotion. I visited these sites personally, as a visitor and bee enthusiast before starting my research, as a heritage student during my internship in Slovenian Ethnographic Museum and as a guide with a group of Czech beekeepers. These visits, as well as interviews with the institutional educators, provided different perceptions of the heritage presentations. In the analyses, the historical development for each site as means of contextualisation of the institution will be outlined. The display which can be viewed at each location will be briefly described as well. The purpose of this analysis is to look at which conceptual pillars of beekeeping are being foregrounded and/or backgrounded in these displays and what conclusions can be drawn about Slovenian beekeeping presentation.

Before looking at these institutions and their bees, it is important to contextualize them within the wider beekeeping heritage management structure. The selected museums and their presentations do not capture the scope and complexity of the transmission of this tradition through musealisation in Slovenia. It is essential to mention another important state agent devoted to the

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<sup>119</sup> Suat Akyürek, "Reflections on visitors' experiences of the beekeeping museum: an analysis of the guestbook notes", *European Journal of Tourism Research* 32 (2022): 6. Last accessed 4 February 2024. <https://ejtr.vumk.eu/index.php/about/article/view/2569/569>.

upkeep of the environmental and cultural heritage, the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum, which manages the national Intangible Cultural Heritage Register and creates educational programmes about various Slovenian traditions and celebrations. The SEM Museum housed an exhibition “Kjer so Čebele Doma” (Where the Bees are at Home) in 2018, enabling international visitors in Ljubljana to gain insight into Slovenian beekeeping’s history, practice and its influence on art and architecture. Moreover, the museum stores a rich collection of painted horizontal beehive panels in the Folk Art Collection, and numerous examples of historical beehives and beekeeping tools in the Collection of Agriculture and Transport. Individual collectors and practitioners should not be omitted, and here I want to highlight beekeepers Koželj and Tigeli, who have private beekeeping museums in their homes. Additionally, the Apiturizem network (see previous chapter) is illustrative of the high number and variety of different presentations of beekeeping heritage in Slovenia. From my personal experience, beekeepers are usually excited to act as heritage mediators and guides through their practice and tradition, share their own personal knowledge, and open their homes as small museums. Thus, the museums which will be presented here are important actors in beekeeping heritage transmission, but they are complemented by beekeepers and their living practice and passion.

As with the other examples in this chapter, the idea is to draw conclusions about what makes Slovenian musealisation practices effective and whether some of these can be applied in a different place with an entirely different social and cultural context, the beekeeping heritage in the Czech Republic. In the analysis in this section, I refer to some concepts which have been identified as effective for safeguarding ICH in the research of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project<sup>120</sup>. These can be detected in the methodologies of the three presentations found in various

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<sup>120</sup> Which explored different ways of safeguarding intangible heritage in museum space whilst working with the ICH practitioners and communities, <https://www.ichandmuseums.eu/en>.

beekeeping heritage musealisation projects. Whilst it is not possible to replicate the Slovenian historical developments and mimic the level of integration of beekeeping heritage in national consciousness and heritage management system in the Czech context, it is possible to infer some general procedures for its better care and protection. These procedures will be reviewed in the next chapter when looking at how the beekeeping heritage is currently being presented in the Czech Republic.

### 3.3.1 - *Living Together - About Bees and Mankind*: Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica

In her historical overview of the museum, Ida Gnilšak, a curator of the 2000 display, offers an illuminating insight into the organized efforts of Slovenian beekeepers in the second half of twentieth century to form a collective assemblage of beekeeping objects. Specifically, there is the 1929 appeal to beekeepers in *The Slovene Beekeeper* to amass items for a future Museum of Apiculture, the first permanent installation of which was opened in 1959 in the baroque manor in Radovljica. This display was later updated with renovations in 1979 and 2000.<sup>121</sup> From her account, the early presence of a holistic understanding and presentation of beekeeping can be recognized, combining displays on the biology of Carniolan bees, painted beehive panels, crafts such as honey bread or candle making, and technical tools. She also mentions the “Slovene Beekeepers Room which exhibited portraits of well-known beekeepers and beekeeping literature from the past.”<sup>122</sup> Additionally, it is also written that “the museum has been home to a family of bees since 1977, when a hive with live bees was set up.”<sup>123</sup> Today, the museum is part of the Museums of the Radovljica Municipality, together with the Town Museum and the Blacksmith

<sup>121</sup> Ida Gnilšak, “The Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica,” in *The Carniolan Bee: Tradition and Heritage in Modern Beekeeping in Slovenia* (Radovljica: Medium, 2003) 237.

<sup>122</sup> Gnilšak, “The Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica.”

<sup>123</sup> Petra Bole, *Living Together: About Bees and Mankind* (Radovljica: Muzeji radovljiške občine, 2021) 102.

Museum in Kropa. The permanent exhibition *Living Together - About Bees and Mankind*, curated by the new director Petra Bole, opened on 21st May 2021. In an interview with the *Ona* magazine, Bole says that the three main pillars of the exhibition are heritage, experience, and education, and that the whole display intended to be holistic and interdisciplinary.<sup>124</sup> In comparison with the previous mediations of the collection to the public, the focus is on provision of an interactive, aesthetically pleasing and animated experience as well as a modern interpretation of museum objects.

Upon walking into the exhibition, one is confronted with a large 3D model of a bee who is ‘resting’ on the panel describing the heritage of beekeeping. The first room offers an overview of the natural and cultural heritage, speaks about the importance of the apiaries in the Slovenian lands, and categorizes the Carniolan bee within the honeybee family. The next room is dedicated to the life of the Carniolan bee, its biology, activities in the hive, modes of communication and pollen collection. Additionally, a spinning wheel provides information on its natural predators and parasites. Close to the window, honeybees can be observed in action through an observatory glass beehive. The next room is entitled “Bees and People”. The museum guests are immediately struck by a life-sized wooden model of an apiary at its centre. In it, visitors can transform themselves into beekeepers, touch and wear beekeeping equipment, look through photographed honeycomb and access the hives. The rest of the room shows different types of beehives, such as the skeps beehive, kranjič type of beehive, or the AŽ and Langstroth beehive. The visitors can also embody the tradition of relocating bees to the pastures on their back by trying on the apparatus which enabled transportation of the hives. The other part of the room features different types of technological

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<sup>124</sup>Klavdija, Miko, “Petra Bole: od arhitekture, oblikovanja nakita do poznavalke čebel” [Petra Bole: From architecture, jewellery design, to an explorer of bees], *Ona Magazine*, published 27 May 2023, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://ona.slovenskenovice.si/intervju/petra-bole-od-arhitekture-oblikovanja-nakita-do-poznavalke-cebel>.

devices for queen breeding and honey extraction, and also acknowledges the urban beekeeping tradition and the “exceptional biodiversity”<sup>125</sup> of the urban environment. The wall spotlights a projection of different apiaries of beekeepers from the Municipality of Radovljica, showing the highly personalised and diverse nature of the bee dwellings. The next room shows the painted beehive panels depicting various religious and secular motifs. An interactive screen allows the visitor to play games connected to the illustrations. The next two rooms are dedicated to the most important historical figures of Slovenian beekeeping (with a large part devoted to Anton Janša and his innovations) and the international trade with Carniolan bees promoted by Jan Strgar. The historical involvement of the Beekeepers’ Association is apparent from these rooms, as they feature old photographs, original editions of The Slovene Beekeeper magazine, or personal correspondences. The next room is more focused on the products connected to beekeeping, such as honey, royal jelly, wax and the associated traditions, such as honey bread and candle making, both of which are considered important intangible heritage disciplines in Slovenia. Medex, the biggest Slovenian company processing bee products, is acknowledged here as the main sponsor of the exhibition. In the last room, the visitors can merge with a bee flying in the field through an interactive projection in which the bee on screen mimics the movement of the visitors in front of the screen. The following table contains a more comprehensive overview of the museum contents.

Room 1	Heritage of Beekeeping
Room 2	The Life of the Carniolan Bee
Room 3	Bees and People
Room 4	Painted Beehive Panels
Room 5	The Boom in Slovenian Beekeeping
Room 6	The Path of the Carniolan Bee

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<sup>125</sup> Panel from the exhibition.

Room 7	Medex and Crafts of Beekeeping
Room 8	Unnamed, Multimedia and Educational Room

*Table 2 Structure of the permanent exhibition in Museum of Apiculture, Radovljica*

The pillars of the Museum of Apiculture's presentation emphasized by the director were heritage, experience, and education. These are fairly broad concepts, but I will try to narrow them down through specific examples from the exhibition. It can be argued that they most tangibly intertwine in the third room. Visitors are invited into the world of the Slovenian beekeepers and their interactions with these winged creatures. Beekeeping is acknowledged as a fully reciprocal activity: "Beekeeping means following and adapting to the laws of the lives of bees, and turning this skill of coexistence to one's advantage."<sup>126</sup> In relation to both cultural and environmental heritage, emphasis is placed on change. What can be seen primarily in the displays are the physical changes in the technology although what the different types of beehives actually reflect are changes in the natural and social environment. Beekeepers are forced to constantly reflect these changes in their practice. From this room, a high level of participation of beekeepers and personal experience with beekeeping of the curator can be read. According to Janet Blake, participation of the bearers of ICH is shown to be an important factor in creating exhibitions around intangible cultural heritage disciplines.<sup>127</sup> She says that museums encouraging participation can act as cultural centres and also as a "bridge between local heritage bearers and 'the authorities', helping to establish an equal dialogue and ensuring that ICH bearers 'have a voice' in setting safeguarding policies."<sup>128</sup> The presentation in the Museum of Apiculture is created with visitor participation in mind which

<sup>126</sup> Panel from the exhibition.

<sup>127</sup> Janet Blake, "Participation" in *Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage, Towards a Third Space in the Heritage Sector: A Companion to Discover Transformative Heritage Practices for the 21st Century*, ed. Nikolić Derić, Tamara et al. (Bruges: Werkplaats immaterieel erfgoed, 2020.): 26-29.

<sup>128</sup> Janet Blake, "Participation" in *Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage, Towards a Third Space in the Heritage Sector: A Companion to Discover Transformative Heritage Practices for the 21st Century*, ed. Nikolić Derić, Tamara et al. (Bruges: Werkplaats immaterieel erfgoed, 2020.): 28.



reflects the intergenerational learning that is at the centre of beekeeping transmission. In line with the name of the exhibition, it also promotes a connection of the past and present - on the one hand, it respects the previous displays and devotes a large part of the exhibition to the nineteenth century beekeeping pioneers, and, on the other hand, it completely modernizes their mode of presentation through inclusion of advanced technologies, emphasizing change and adaptation in a fairly conventional museum setting.

### 3.3.2 - Bees Past and Future - The House of the Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora



*Figure 7 Display of beekeeping objects in the House of Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora, Slovenia*



*Figure 8 Display of types of honey in House of Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora, Slovenia*

Višnja Gora is a small medieval town with approximately 1000 inhabitants. It is also a town with the largest collection of snails in Slovenia, a reminder of a local folk tale.<sup>129</sup> In terms of beekeeping history, the town is significant because of its proximity to the Podsmreka castle, where the Röschutz family operated their Carniolan queen bee breeding and international trade. The project for a future museum was approved by the town in 2018, also marking the unveiling of the educational apiary with painted beehive panels and the Carniolan bee monument constructed from metal by local craftsmen.<sup>130</sup> In 2021, the reconstruction of an old primary school building ended, and the House of the Carniolan Bee was opened with the support of the Municipality of Ivančna Gorica and the State of Slovenia. The museum is distinctive in its modern, spare interior design, café, the hexagonal hostel on the top floor, the transparent roof and the technologically advanced

<sup>129</sup> Mojca Zorko, “Višnja Gora je kraj s največ polži” [Višnja Gora is a town with most snails], *Dnevnik*, published 4 December 2004, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://www.dnevnik.si/103784>.

<sup>130</sup> Matej Mandelj, “Slovesna otvoritev Čebelnjaka Kranjske čebele v Višnji Gori” [Celebratory opening of House of Carniolan Bee’s apiary in Višnja Gora], *Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association Website*, published 11 May 2018, last accessed 24 May 2024. [https://www.czs.si/objave\\_podrobno\\_czs/9282](https://www.czs.si/objave_podrobno_czs/9282).

exhibition. In the first room, the display features projections of actors playing members of Röschutz family and telling the story of their lives and the bee trade, as well as interactive display with pressed melliferous flowers. The next room is dedicated to bee biology, featuring nanoscopic photographs of bee body parts, and beekeeping tools. The next room is a sit-in apiary which smells like pollen and propolis. Visitors can sit there and observe life in the beehive and watch close-up videos of the bee life cycle. The last room introduces honey and bee products as well as showcasing the Röschutz family cookbook. The exhibition is not large, but it is very effective in the way it uses advanced technology, as demonstrated during the trip with the Czech beekeepers, who were meticulously taking pictures of the nanoscopic photographs and were particularly interested in the construction plan for the wooden hexagonal hotel in the top floor.

Thanks to the work of the museum educator, dr. Petra Špehar, who lives in Višnja Gora as well as other team members, the museum is not a detached unit in the town. During quiet off-season days when there are no visitors, the museum functions as a cultural centre for locals and volunteer groups, for blood donations, or for club meetings.<sup>131</sup> It is possible that the locals welcome the modern touristic landmark because of their connection to the building of the old school, or the active efforts of the museum to involve them in the events that take place there, such as permanent exhibitions with local artists. Part of the educational programme also involves an interactive tour of the town of Višnja Gora, during which visitors can hear stories about life in the town directly from the locals. Špehar said this is effective because it creates a dialogue, and the locals feel happy they can share their stories and the visitors feel happy they can hear directly from local craftsmen, craftswomen and beekeepers.<sup>132</sup> The museum therefore becomes a place in which modernity and

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<sup>131</sup> Personal interview with dr. Petra Špehar, an educator in the House of Carniolan bee in Višnja Gora. Conducted in April 2023.

<sup>132</sup> Personal interview with dr. Petra Špehar, an educator in the House of Carniolan bee in Višnja Gora. Conducted in April 2023.

tradition overlap, and where the local context is not forgotten. Locals co-create the narratives which are being presented in the exhibition. In this sense, understand the mode of presentation may be understood as being “liquid,” as termed by Léontine Meijer-van Mensch, not being based on strict guidelines, but existing relationally, in conversation with its environment.<sup>133</sup>

#### **4. Decentralised Nation, Industrialised Memory – Transmitting the Beekeeping Tangible and Intangible Heritage in the Czech Republic**

As previously analysed in the first chapter, the formulation of the Czech national identity is complicated and contradictory. It not comprehensively united – rather, it is scattered around the country, usually tied to one’s own town or region. A strong cultural divide exists between two central lands Bohemia and Moravia, with the former being more industrial in character and with the latter being more rural. As described by Antonín Vaishar and Jana Zapletalová, “Moravia has always been an important hinterland for Bohemia and its peripherality provided a good basis to keep some traditional culture.”<sup>134</sup> This is reflected in the fact that the headquarters of the National Institute of Folk Culture is located in Strážnice, a small village in the South Moravian region, close to the border with Slovakia. According to Article 2 of the founding charter from 2008, the purpose of the Institute is “to secure scientific research; informational, educational and methodological service in the field of care for traditional and folk culture in the territory of the Czech Republic”<sup>135</sup>. In other words, it is the main Czech expert heritage institution dedicated to the management and

<sup>133</sup> Léontine Meijer-van Mensch, “The ‘liquid’ Museum’ in *Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage, Towards a Third Space in the Heritage Sector: A Companion to Discover Transformative Heritage Practices for the 21st Century*. Ed. Nikolić Derić, Tamara et al. (Bruges: Werkplaats immaterieel erfgoed, 2020.): 67-71.

<sup>134</sup> Antonín Vaishar and Jana Zapletalová, “Regional identities of Czech historical lands”, *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 65, no.1 (2016), 18. DOI: 10.15201/hungeobull.65.1.2.

<sup>135</sup> “Article 2” Founding Charter no.18724/2008, *Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic*, published 19 December 2008, [https://www.msmt.cz/file/45821\\_1\\_1/](https://www.msmt.cz/file/45821_1_1/). Signed by Václav Jehlička, the then Minister of Culture. Last accessed 17 May 2024. My own translation.

transmission of traditional folk cultures, what we may refer to as intangible heritage.<sup>136</sup> The Institute is responsible for the management of the Czech List of Intangible Elements of Traditional Folk Culture, the Bearers of Folk Craft Tradition programme and the Czech nominations for the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity. Currently, there are nine Czech UNESCO inscriptions, including Czech and Slovak puppet-making or Shrovetide rounds and masks in Hlinecko Region. The national list currently has 33 elements, 22 of which are tied to a specific town or region, pointing to the fact that processes of heritagisation happen primarily in the regional centres. This theorisation is in line with the fact that identities of Czech people are formulated on a local, rather than national level.

Beekeeping heritage is not yet parts of these lists. In fact, from my current viewpoint, it is not understood as heritage. Since the period of socialist collectivization of fields and central economy, beekeeping seems to be primarily categorised as an industry, a part of agriculture with a specific goal to pollinate crops and produce honey. Beekeeping is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture, and the bee is perceived as agricultural animal.<sup>137</sup> The governmental website states that “the Ministry of Agriculture is interested in maintaining and restoring this industry. The main

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<sup>136</sup> The other big institution dedicated to the safeguarding of heritage is the *National Heritage Institute* which was established in 2003. However, the institution is almost entirely dedicated to the research and preservation of 106 heritage sites, mostly castles and palaces. It also includes three methodical research centers, which are concerned with industrial heritage in Ostrava, modern architecture in Brno and garden cultures in Kroměříž. Heritage care is through *National Heritage Institute* performed in the area of movable and immovable tangible heritage, and through the *National Institute of Folk Culture* in the area of intangible heritage. I believe that the institutional division should be reconciliated in order to overcome the dichotomies between tangible and intangible heritage to gain more holistic understanding of culture and its material and immaterial manifestations. The division also points to the current rigid understanding of task of heritage protection, of which the Law about national heritage care no.20/1987 is emblematic. The law from 1987 states that cultural relics (“památky” – etymologically from pamatovat – to remember) are “immovable or movable things, which are (a) important evidences of historical development, way of life and social environment from ancient times to the present, as expressions of creative capabilities and work of human from various spheres of human activities, for their value revolutionary, historical, artistic, scientific, and technical; (b) have a direct relationship to significant figures or historical events.” The intangible is not mentioned. “Law no.20/1987 Sb.” *Humans for People*, <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1987-20>, last accessed 17 May 2024.

<sup>137</sup> František Meixner, “Bee is an agricultural animal, like any other”, *Our Breeding*, published 21 August 2001, last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://naschov.cz/vcela-je-hospodarske-zvire-jako-kazde-jine/>.

mission and strategic priority of beekeeping in the Czech Republic is to ensure a sufficient number of healthy bee colonies for sufficient pollination of agricultural crops and maximum quality honey production.”<sup>138</sup> The historical, cultural and environmental value of beekeeping seems to be structurally backgrounded in favour of technological advancement and material results in endeavours for transmission. We can observe some signs that these conversations are changing in the Czech environment, and that bees are becoming central to dialogues about biodiversity and health, sustainability and food safety, and even culture, arguably also thanks to the influence of social media and international promotional programmes of UNESCO or Food and Agriculture Organisation. Nevertheless, these discussions are still happening mostly on regional level, due to the previously mentioned fragmentation of Czech identity, and the general decentralisation of both centres for protection of intangible heritage and the Czech Beekeepers’ Association. Even more, they are dependent on the interest and passions of individuals or civic organisations, rather than encouraged by the conceptions of heritage in national governmental policies. In this chapter, I will analyse two vehicles for beekeeping heritage transmission, namely two beekeeping schools and two musealisation projects. These case studies illustrate strengths and weaknesses in the current Czech beekeeping heritage management system - on the one hand, we can see interest in technical expertise and keeping of healthy productive bees, on the other, resistance of beekeepers to move beyond the material realms of their craft. We can observe high level of organisation amongst beekeepers and yet detect declining levels of interest in participation on both national and local levels.

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<sup>138</sup>“Strategy”, *Ministry of Agriculture*, last accessed 17 May 2024, <https://eagri.cz/public/portal/mze/lesy/vcelarstvi/strategie>.

#### 4.1. Beekeeping Schools in Nasavrky and Blatná

In the Czech Republic, anyone can become a beekeeper without any special training or qualification. This can be seen as problematic or dangerous, especially when beekeepers do not have sufficient technical knowledge regarding treatment of diseases or proper handling of bees, because they do not only endanger the health of their own bees, but also of those living in the surrounding area. There is no official organisation which would check or control individual approach to beekeeping, resulting in variety of used hives and lack of communication between beekeepers. Whilst the Czech Beekeepers' Association and local societies can provide support and advice, not everyone is registered as a member of these associations or searches for such programmes. It is recommended to become a member of a local association, but it is not compulsory. There are several responsibilities stemming from the national legislation. I include these here to illustrate how easily one can become a beekeeper with very little information, to highlight the importance of the presence of beekeeping schools and educational centres which will be described below. According to the article 20 of Law 154/2000 Sb., for bee breeding, it is only possible to use *Apis mellifera carnica*, the Carniolan honey bee. (As of 2024, the Czech Republic and Slovenia are the only two countries in Europe which have such requirement as part of the legislation according to the breeding law.) This is to ensure that beekeepers do not keep other types of bees, avoiding crossbreeding, which can increase liability to illnesses and decreased overall health of bees. However, as pointed out by an article from 2023, the law is limited to controlling breeding activity, not the keeping – therefore, a beekeeper can technically use another type of bee if they have the preference to do so, which in consequence endangers other bee families in the

vicinity.<sup>139</sup> There are only two formal requirements for beginning beekeepers – according to article 80 of Law 136/2004 Sb., one has to register the number and location of their beehives to the Czech-Moravian Association of Animal Keepers in Hradištko in Central Bohemian Region, and has to annually report back to the organisation until 1 September about any changes.

What kind of professional and social situation is reinforced by these conditions? Arguably, one mirroring the decentralisation of the country and one producing alienated individualist approaches to craft disciplines. This is especially contra-productive in a field such as beekeeping, in which practitioners need to actively communicate, inform one another to prevent potential problems and diseases, learn together, be flexible and cooperative. There is a need for improved legislation which would encourage sharing of knowledge and enforce more formal training in local or regional communities. Despite the gaps in legal system, there is still a high level of organisation of beekeepers. According to Kateřina Mohrová, who conducted research on the present attitudes of Czech beekeepers toward the profession and their satisfaction with the Czech Beekeepers' Association, “most beekeepers have their successors, either in families or beekeeping clubs for children. Motivation of children and teenagers is determined by the attitude towards nature of their parents. The future of beekeeping is dependent on traditional transmission of beekeeping practice.”<sup>140</sup> In my understanding, what is meant by the ‘traditional transmission’ is precisely the personal interaction with other experienced beekeepers and biologists. For this reason, it is necessary to encourage and support functioning of educational centres.

<sup>139</sup> Soňa Vaicenbacherová, “Some beekeepers do not respect the breeding law, in consequence they harm the Carniolan bee population in the Czech Republic”, *Czech Radio*, published 25 May 2023, last accessed 7 May 2024, <https://region.rozhlas.cz/nekteri-vcelari-nerespektuji-plemenarsky-zakon-v-dusledku-kazi-populaci-vcely-8999250#:~:text=Podle%C3%A1k%20154%20o%20plemenit%C4%9B,uv%C3%A1d%C4%9Bt%20do%20ob%C4%9Bhu%20k%20plemenit%C4%9B..>

<sup>140</sup> Marie Šotolová, “Beekeeping in the Czech Republic at Crossroads”, *Modern Beekeeper* 3 (2016), 45. Last accessed 8 May 2024, <https://www.modernivcelar.eu/3089-vcelareni-v-ceske-republice-na-rozcesti>.



In the following section, I present two main institutions in which one can acquire beekeeping education and, in the end, obtain a vocational certificate and in case of successful examination, a professional qualification from Czech National Pedagogical Institute and Ministry of Agriculture. I do not include other important centres of transmission of beekeeping knowledge, such as local training programmes and seminars or educational activities of individual beekeepers' associations, which are dispersed across the country, and are dedicated instead of holistic understanding of beekeeping for beginners primarily to more technical and niche topics for beekeepers with a level of experience, such as diseases, queen breeding, or processing of honey, wax, and other bee products. I also omit beekeeping clubs for children and private training offered by individuals or beekeeping farms, as these are primarily short-term hobby courses. In the privately offered courses, the organisers have a high level of agency in what topics the course covers, how much time is dedicated to the practical work and how much it costs. For example, the *Happy Bees* year-long training programme includes fifteen hours of theoretical classes and four hours of practical course with the bees. The goal is to provide complex preparation for beginning beekeepers, mostly using "classical approaches to beekeeping, but emphasizing gentle and considerate methods, so that you can also have happy bees."<sup>141</sup> Courses offered by beekeeper Miroslav Holas are in contrast for one day only. Holas recognises the limits of this duration: "One-time course cannot replace years of intentional practice of beekeeping, however, the close observation, explication and experienced advice can help with making keeping bees easier and more comprehensible."<sup>142</sup> I add this here to show the variety in trainings offered, and the lack of

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<sup>141</sup> "Year-long beekeeping course 2022/2023", *Happy Bees*, published 28 June 2022, last accessed 8 May 2024, <https://stastnevcely.cz/rocnikurz-vcelareni-2022-2023/>. My own translation.

<sup>142</sup> Miroslav Holas, "Beekeeping courses in 2024", *Beekeeping Courses Website*, last accessed 8 May 2024, <https://www.vcelarskekurzy.cz/vcelarske-kurzy/>. My own translation.

common guidelines and methodologies, to again highlight the importance of educational centres which provide holistic and structured long-term beekeeping courses.

As mentioned above, both the Beekeeping Vocational School in Nasavrky and the Beekeeping Training, which is one of the programmes offered by the general Vocational School Blatná, provide their participants with opportunity to obtain both the vocational certificate and the national qualification at the end of their studies. Whereas the Beekeeping Vocational School cooperates strongly with the Czech Beekeepers' Association, the beekeeper training in the Vocational School in Blatná cooperates with another association, namely the PSNV (Pracovní společnost nástavkových včelařů), literally translated into Working Society of Super Beekeepers (referring to the structure placed on a beehive in which bees store honey), which was established to promote and unite beekeepers working specifically with the Langstroth type of beehive.<sup>143</sup> The two institutions are in different parts of the country and do not seem to be in close cooperation with each other. More research needs to be done on the social and technological differences between many existing individual beekeeping associations in the Czech Republic. We can however observe that the individualisation of practice and the lack of cooperation between the training institutions of two big associations point to the fact that the Czech beekeepers are divided, and their approaches and know-how vary across the country and are not united, just as their practitioners.

#### 4.1.1. Beekeeping Vocational School and Educational Centre in Nasavrky

The Beekeeping Vocational School and Educational Centre in Nasavrky was founded in September 1951, amongst the period of Czechoslovak socialist collectivization of rural areas,

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<sup>143</sup> “Working Society of Super Beekeepers CZ”, *PSNV website*, last accessed 9 May 2024, <https://www.psnv.cz/stranka/pracovni-spolecnost-nastavkovych-vcelaru-cz-z-s/>. My own translation.

resulting in establishment of Czechoslovak state farms and later united co-operative farms. Nasavrky is a small town with around 1200 people in the Pardubice Region, approximately halfway between Prague and Brno. Whilst in this section I want to be primarily concerned with the present functioning of the school, it is necessary to note that the socialist state significantly influenced the initial functioning of the school, and the political changes in the following decades were reflected in the name, structure, programmes offered, and ownership of the Nasavrky beekeeping centre. In the beginning, according to Antonín Přidal, the initial two-year programme was offered to those who finished primary school, and after also to those who already had beekeeping practice.<sup>144</sup> In 1952, a special programme was established for students with previous experience, who were coming primarily from the industrial state farms and co-operatives and needed to be trained for attending to a large number of beehives.<sup>145</sup> In 1965, the programme was replaced by three-year long double study programme *Beekeeper-fruit grower* and the institution transformed into Agricultural Vocational School, illustrating shifts in thinking about the discipline.<sup>146</sup> We can infer that in this time bees are perceived to be connected to their environment and as responding to its changes and that beekeepers are encouraged to closely observe variety in natural and environmental cycles through fruit tree care. Moreover, bees are seen as an asset for pollination of fruit trees which also increases agricultural production of both honey and fruit crop, which was part of the socialist industrialisation of Czech agriculture. Following the velvet revolution and the fall of communism in 1989, the economic and educational structures in which

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<sup>144</sup> Antonín Přidal, “Historie a současnost včelařského školství“ [History and present of beekeeping educational system“] in *Jubilejní včelařský sborník: 150 let organizovaného včelařství na Moravě a ve Slezsku* [Jubilee Beekeeping Anthology: 150 years of organised beekeeping in Moravia and Slesia] (Brno: Gloria, 2004): 27.

<sup>145</sup> Zdeněk Kulháněk, “Nasavrcká škola v proměnách sedmi desetiletí: První žáci nastoupili v roce 1951” [“Nasavrky school through the changes of ten decades: First pupils attended in 1951”], *Czech Beekeepers’ Association Website*, published 15 February 2023, last accessed 13 May 2024, <https://www.vcelarstvi.cz/casopis/nasavrcka-skola-v-promenach-sedmi-desetileti:-prvni-zaci-nastoupili-v-roce-1951/>.

<sup>146</sup> Josef Lojda, “Kde se včelaři učí už 70 let” [“Where beekeepers learn already for 70 years”], *Lidové noviny*, published 16 September 2021, last accessed 12 May 2024, <https://www.vcelarstvi.cz/foto-galerie/138-1453.jpg>.

the school operates change, and the school offered additional study programmes, such as Joiner, Gardener, Business, or in 1991 Operation of Household specifically for women.<sup>147</sup> According to Josef Lojda, the current director of the Nasavrky Beekeeping School, who was interviewed specifically for the purposes of this thesis, after 1989 the interest of the public in vocational trainings significantly lowered, and the programme had to be transformed into a three-year long distant beekeeping training, which is presently the only taught study field in the vocational school. Since 2001, the school is operated by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Czech Beekeepers' Association, and despite the complicated historical developments, today the school constitutes an important agent in transmission of holistic beekeeping knowledge.

More detailed historical information is not available, and the description of the programme is also highly limited. The following table reproduces the beekeeping training programme syllabus approved in 2004 which can be found on the website.<sup>148</sup> The students are required to attend classes during one weekend per month for the duration of three years.

Subject	Total hours	Year		
		I.	II.	III.
Biology of plants	25	15	10	-
Biology of honey bee	20	10	10	-
Economics and marketing in beekeeping	30	10	10	10
Queen bee breeding	25	5	10	10
Information and communication technology	30	10	10	10

<sup>147</sup> Zdeněk Kulháněk, “Nasavrcká škola v proměnách sedmi desetiletí: První žáci nastoupili v roce 1951” [“Nasavrky school through the changes of ten decades: First pupils attended in 1951”], *Czech Beekeepers' Association Website*, published 15 February 2023, last accessed 13 May 2024, <https://www.vcelarstvi.cz/casopis/nasavrcka-skola-v-promenach-sedmi-desetileti:-prvni-zaci-nastoupili-v-roce-1951/>.

<sup>148</sup> This syllabus was approved by article 60 of law no.561/2004 Sb., “Škola: Informace o oboru včelař” [“School: Information about the beekeeping study programme”], *Nasavrky Beekeeping School Website*, last accessed 14 May 2024, [https://novy.souvnasavrky.cz/prilohy/Ucebni\\_plan.pdf](https://novy.souvnasavrky.cz/prilohy/Ucebni_plan.pdf).

Diseases and bee parasites	20	-	10	10
Expert practical training	178	66	68	44
Industrial beekeeping	18	-	-	18
Beehive construction and beekeeping equipment	20	10	10	-
Beekeeping	59	16	27	16
Bee forage	36	10	10	16
Bee products	30	-	15	15
Utilization of bee products	12	-	-	12
Foundations of natural sciences	28	13	-	15
News in beekeeping based on current situation	12	-	-	12
	543	165	190	188

*Table 3 Structure of the Beekeeping study programme in the Nasavrky Vocational School*

The syllabus reveals that the largest time dotation of the programme is dedicated to the practical training of future beekeepers, which is inarguably essential as it provides opportunities for close observation and interaction with the expert teachers and other amateurs and gives way to a creation of community. Significant time is also spent on biology of plants and bee forage, which is taught in the special beekeeping arboretum with melliferous plants, fruit trees and a short beekeeping path.<sup>149</sup> Another focus of the transmission seems to be product-oriented professionalisation of the future practice of the students, such as marketing communication with customers or operation of large-scale beehive stations. Lojda observed that recent teaching efforts are connected to implementation of bee products in apitherapeutical practices, for which the school opened an “apihouse” in April 2024.<sup>150</sup> The guidelines for the programme speak of key

<sup>149</sup> “Arboretum”, *Nasavrky Beekeeping School Website*, last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://novy.souvnasavrky.cz/arboretum/>.

<sup>150</sup> Jarmila Machová, “Včelařské učiliště v Nasavrkách má nový apidomek” [„The Beekeeping Vocational School in Nasavrky has a new apihouse“], *Czech Beekeepers’ Association Website*, published 29 April 2024, last accessed 14

competences to be achieved by the successful graduates, among which there are categories “Personal and Social Competence” and “Civic Competence and Cultural Subconsciousness”. The latter states that the graduate “acts in spirit of sustainable development and keeping of healthy environment”, “feels their own cultural, national and personal identity” and “recognizes traditions and value of their nation, analyses past and present in European and world context”<sup>151</sup>. However, no subjects are concerned solely with beekeeping history or its cultural heritage. There is no consideration for depiction of bees in literatures, visual media and arts, creation of educational programmes for children and adults, ecological beekeeping or tourism. The students are taught beekeeping, but they are not necessarily (at least from the look of the syllabus) taught about the wider historical and cultural contexts of beekeeping both on national and international level. In other words, the programme is mostly technical and material in its specialisation, which also means that the graduates of the programme will continue to consider the discipline as a part of agricultural industry, and their focus will be on the technology, materiality, and production. In this case, the motivation of people to unite will not be based on grounds of shared heritage and identity, but on advancements in technology and increase in production. The presentation of beekeeping history and heritage is dependent largely on personal interest and motivation of individuals, and their skill to create educational programmes that place bees in wider national cultural and environmental context. This is largely unsustainable and can result in the forgetting of beekeeping tradition and history.

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May 2024, <https://www.vcelarstvi.cz/aktuality/vcelarske-uciliste-v-nasavrkach-ma-novy-apidomek/>. Personal interview with Josef Lojda.

<sup>151</sup> “Školní vzdělávací program 2014, 41-51-H/02 Včelař” [“School Educational Programme 2014, 41-51-H/02 Beekeeper”], *Nasavrky Beekeeping School Website, Study Documents*, published 1 January 2014, last accessed 14 May 2024, [https://www.souvnasavrky.cz/prilohy/svp\\_na\\_stranky.docx](https://www.souvnasavrky.cz/prilohy/svp_na_stranky.docx).

#### 4.1.2. Beekeeper Training in the Vocational School Blatná

Before speaking about the syllabus of the programme in Blatná, it is first necessary to recall the history of its founding society. The Working Society of Super Beekeepers came to life in Prague in December 2000 as a part of larger European society and currently has around 700 members<sup>152</sup>. On their website, we can read that “[a]t its birth, there were progressive beekeepers...immediately after its formation promoting super technology, organising lectures about beekeeping, summer schools, and foreign expert beekeeping excursions.”<sup>153</sup> The most common type of this beehive is the Langstroth type, which uses supers 448 mm long and can be easily operated from above.<sup>154</sup> Despite being the most popular type of hive in the world, in the region of Central Europe, the Langstroth type of beehive was not widely used until recently and was not especially promoted by the central beekeepers’ association, which then resulted in the differentiation of super technology enthusiasts and consequent founding of the society.<sup>155</sup> Some of the other goals of the organisation are to care for growth of expert beekeeping knowledge of its members, coming up with long-term sustainable practical approaches to beekeeping and better promotion of beekeeping products.<sup>156</sup> Since 2004, the society is also responsible for the publishing of the Modern Beekeeper magazine, which is also differentiated from the magazine Beekeeping published by the Czech Beekeepers’ Association.<sup>157</sup> The two associations are not strictly in

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<sup>152</sup> From personal correspondence with Petr Texl, a member of the board of Working Society of Super Beekeepers and teacher at the Vocational School Blatná.

<sup>153</sup> “About Us”, *Working Society of Super Beekeepers Website*, last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://www.psnv.cz/stranka/pracovni-spolcnost-nastavkovych-vcelaru-cz-z-s/>. My own translation.

<sup>154</sup> Veselý Včelařství?

<sup>155</sup> “About Us”, *Working Society of Super Beekeepers Website*, last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://www.psnv.cz/stranka/pracovni-spolcnost-nastavkovych-vcelaru-cz-z-s/>.

<sup>156</sup> “Annual Report 2022”, *Working Society of Super Beekeepers Website*, published 29 June 2023, last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://www.psnv.cz/attachment/s-3-d34781a6774b/1125-vyrocní-zpráva-2022.pdf>. My own translation.

<sup>157</sup> According to Petr Texl, the founder of Modern Beekeeper Vlastimil Protivínský was previously an editor of column Important living figures of our beekeeping in the Beekeeping magazine, but was discouraged by the recommendations of the editorial board on who he should write about. This led him to a foundation of a new independent Czech beekeeping media Modern Beekeeper. Since 2015, the magazine is led by dr. Marie Šotolová. Petr Texl, “20 let PSNV

competition, however, they show different preferences of beekeepers in their practice and beliefs and expose the fragmentation of central beekeeping society.

Unlike the school in Nasavrky, the Vocational School Blatná is not entirely dedicated to beekeeping. Conversely, since its establishment in 1962, it has offered a variety of subjects such as repairman of agricultural machinery, electrotechnical production, mechanic, electrician, or car electrician.<sup>158</sup> The two-year beekeeping distant training programme was introduced in 2011 after a successful collaboration between the Vocational School Blatná and the Working Society of Super Beekeepers and has since hosted more than 250 graduates.<sup>159</sup> Much like in Nasavrky, the demand of recent years much exceeds the possibilities of what the institution can offer, illustrating large increase in interest of general public in beekeeping.<sup>160</sup> Besides beehive stations, the school also offers a joiner workshop and working stations used for honey extraction and wax processing. According to the website, the graduates are able to tend to bees throughout the beekeeping year, breed queen bees, identify and prevent diseases, keep records of their beekeeping activities, repair beehives and other beekeeping structures and cultivate melliferous flowers.<sup>161</sup> The following table shows the structure and the subjects of the programme, to ease a visual comparison with the Nasavrky school.<sup>162</sup>

Educational module	Number of consultation hours
Education in information and communication technologies	

(2000-2020)” [“20 years of PSNV (2000-2020)”], *Modern Beekeeper* 1 (2021), last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://www.modernivcelar.eu/8244-20-let-psnv-2000-2020>.

<sup>158</sup> “History: Milestones”, *Vocational School Blatná Website*, last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://soublatna.cz/o-skole/historie/>.

<sup>159</sup> “Study programme Beekeeper became tradition in Vocational School Blatná”, *Almanach: Sixty years of craft schooling in Blatná region 1962-2022*, 90. Published 2022, last accessed 15 May 2024. Obtained through e-mail in personal correspondence with Petr Texl.

<sup>160</sup> *Almanach: Sixty years of craft schooling in Blatná region 1962-2022*, 90.

<sup>161</sup> “Information for students of Beekeeping study programme”, *Vocational School Blatná Website*, last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://soublatna.cz/vcelar-info/vcelar>.

<sup>162</sup> “Information for students of Beekeeping study programme”, *Vocational School Blatná Website*, last accessed 14 May 2024, <https://soublatna.cz/vcelar-info/vcelar>.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and communication technology</li> </ul>	7
Education in natural sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundations of biology and ecology</li> </ul>	7
Applied technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biology of honey bee</li> <li>Bee forage</li> <li>Expert practical training</li> </ul>	20 10 6
Beekeeping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beekeeping zootechnics</li> <li>Queen breeding</li> <li>Diseases and bee parasites</li> <li>Beehive construction and beekeeping equipment</li> <li>Commercial beekeeping enterprises</li> <li>Expert practical training</li> </ul>	28 18 20 12 10 95
Processing of bee products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bee products</li> <li>Processing of bee products</li> <li>Marketing in beekeeping</li> <li>Expert practical training</li> </ul>	19 15 10 40
	317

*Table 4 Structure of the Beekeeping study programme in the Blatná Vocational School*

When we compare the two study programmes, we can observe their significant semblance to one another, regardless of the different types of technologies used. The focus of the training again seems to be primarily technical, with the additional purpose of addressing ecological approaches to beekeeping. What both schools in Nasavrky and Blatná offer is a strong sense of community during the course of long-term studies, and also after the completion of the programmes, which can substitute for some of the gaps in the syllabi and create productive dialogues, new ideas, interactions, initiatives, and most importantly, a sense of shared identity and heritage. Not only the beekeepers meet every month during their studies, but also can attend additional projects, lectures, open days, graduate meetings, or excursions. In 2018, Vocational School Blatná hosted a meeting of graduates of the beekeeping programme, which was attended by more than 100 people, planting a linden tree as a symbol of celebration of symbiosis between

the Czech beekeepers and the bees.<sup>163164</sup> According to Martin Bordovský, during the COVID-19 pandemic, besides attending general courses, the students of the beekeeping training in Blatná had the possibility to connect weekly online on Fridays to meetings of beekeeping club and socialise with other beekeepers<sup>165</sup>. In conclusion, the syllabi of the courses could be adapted to provide more information about both Czech and international beekeeping histories and presents, and to engage with the overlap of beekeeping with other disciplines such as art, literature, museum education and environmental sciences. However, both the Beekeeping Vocational School in Nasavrky and the study programme in Blatná are crucial to direct transmission of beekeeping knowledge and practice and indirect safeguarding of tangible and intangible beekeeping heritage, through their creation of beekeeping networks and communities.

#### 4.2. Musealisation Projects in Chlebovice and Hulice

People are becoming interested in the topic of bees, which is shown in the fact that projects of musealisation of Czech beekeeping heritage can be found across the whole country. They are usually small temporary exhibitions, museums of local beekeeping associations, or parts of educational programmes of museums, which is again reflective of the regionalisation of identity and heritage. Scholarly analyses of heritage projects related to beekeeping are non-existent. The only exception is the master's thesis of Magdalena Plisková from 2016, titled "Proposition for a Beekeeping Exhibition".<sup>166</sup> Part of the thesis is an inventory of existing museum projects related

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<sup>163</sup> Marie Šotolová, "Meeting of beekeepers-graduates", *Almanach: Sixty years of craft schooling in Blatná region 1962-2022*, 84-85. Published 2022, last accessed 14 May 2024. Obtained through e-mail in personal correspondence with Petr Texl.

<sup>164</sup> The linden is considered a national symbol of the Czech Republic and it is also an important part of bee forage.

<sup>165</sup> Martin Bordovský, *Almanach: Sixty years of craft schooling in Blatná region 1962-2022*, 90.

<sup>166</sup> Magdalena Plisková, "Návrh výstavy o včelařství" ["Proposition for a Beekeeping Exhibition"] (Master's thesis, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University Brno, 2016), 55-63, last accessed 19 May 2024, <https://is.muni.cz/th/brqhp/Pliskova.pdf>.

to beekeeping in the Czech Republic, including museums entirely dedicated to beekeeping, as well as permanent displays in various types of museums. Besides the two examples I analyse in this thesis, Plisková also mentions the Beekeeping Museum in Moravský kras, Hranice and Rosice, all of which are managed by local beekeeping associations, similar in type to the museum in Chlebovice, which is also part of a regional society for beekeeping. She then continues to list fifteen exhibitions which mentioned or thematised human-bee relationship, a part of her thesis which I consider a significant contribution to documentation of Czech beekeeping heritage transmission. Out of those described, all were based in villages or smaller towns. Several of these exhibitions (or parts of exhibitions) were related to the effects of honey and other bee products on health and Czech tradition of gingerbread making. They mostly featured photographs and information panels, and were visited by students of local schools and other visitors from the region.

To Plisková's list of temporary exhibitions I would like to add several projects which happened after the finishing of her research, such as the "Bees and their world" exhibition which took place in the Central-Bohemian Museum in Roztoky from April 2022 to October 2022, "Human and bees" organised in 2022 by Museum of Hlučínsko Region, "About bees and humans" in the Museum of Litovel in 2020, the interactive exhibition of Viktor Sýkora's photographs which was part of the beekeeping display in Botanical Garden of Prague in 2023, or the "Kingdom of bees and herbs" which was opened in May 2024 in Sladovna Písek. As apparent, musealisation projects are not scarce, but they are organised locally and exposed to a limited number of visitors. In this section, I wish to illustrate some challenges which need to be improved in the field of museology and museum education to support more systematic and structured protection and transmission of Czech beekeeping heritage.

#### 4.2.1. Bees = Life - Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice



*Figure 9 Renovated reeve's manor, location of Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice, Czech Republic*



Figure 10 Bees=Life, Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice, Czech Republic

I was sitting in the corner and dark, but I was to not feel alone any further  
 Belonging to long line of lives who passed through the handsome building.  
 Line which will grow for long. After all, I heard the voices from the yard  
 Of children who came to learn beekeeping.<sup>167</sup> -František Sháněl, April 2011

The village of Chlebovice is situated in the Moravian-Silesian Region, close to Polish borders in the east of the Czech Republic. It is mentioned in administrative records of the region already from 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>168</sup> The largest close city is Ostrava, the third biggest city in the country and place of abandoned and adapted sites of industrial heritage, with the Lower Vítkovice former

<sup>167</sup> František Sháněl, “Story of reeve’s manor in Chlebovice” in *Včelařský naučný areál v proměnách času: Sborník k 25. výročí založení včelařského muzea* [Beekeeping Museum in the Changes of Time: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Establishment of the Beekeeping Museum], ed. Marie Knödllová (Frýdek-Místek: Český svaz včelařů, 2020), 24.

<sup>168</sup> Bohumír Haleš and Josef Žižka, *Co odnes čas: Osudy dědiny Chlebovice během sedmi staletí* [What time took away: Fortunes of the village Chlebovice during seven centuries] ed. Josef Nastálek (Frýdek-Místek: Výbor občanské iniciativy, 2000): 9-10.



mine being the most popular example. Barbora Duží and Jiří Jakubínský note that the rapid process of industrialisation was dictated by the visions of the communist regime, which significantly changed the ambience in the region: “The main role of urban development was to fulfil the function of setting up and meeting the norms of coal mining and metal production. This characteristic of the city was expressed by the folk epithets ‘the steel heart of the republic’, ‘the steel city’ and ‘Black Ostrava’.”<sup>169</sup> Bosák et al. call the industrial heritage of the city “important point of self-reference”, pointing out the connection of local identity with the mines and metal constructions.<sup>170</sup> It takes approximately one hour to get from Ostrava to Chlebovice by car, and a little more with public transport. When I was travelling from Prague, it took me approximately six hours to travel to the Beekeeping Museum. I add this context here to show the difficult accessibility of the village, but also to illustrate the unavoidable confrontation with memory of urbanisation and industrialisation one experiences on the way to the site. The largest Czech beekeeping collection of honey extractors and other materials is situated essentially in what could be called industrial and urban landscape.<sup>171</sup> Chlebovice is a small village with approximately 600 inhabitants. Besides the Beekeeping Museum, there are several other landmarks, such as the Church of Saint Nicholas, dam lake Olešná or lookout tower Panorama. The village also has active citizens who unite in several clubs and organisations, such as football club, senior club, hunter club *Tetřev*, volunteer firefighter club, and *For More Beautiful Chlebovice* club.

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<sup>169</sup> Barbora Duží and Jiří Jakubínský, “Brownfield Dilemmas in the Transformation of Post-communist Cities: A Case Study of Ostrava, Czech Republic”, *Human Geographies* 7, no.2 (2013), 54.

<sup>170</sup> Vojtěch Bosák, Alexander Nováček, Ondřej Slach, “Industrial culture as an asset, barrier and creative challenge for restructuring of old industrial cities: case study of Ostrava (Czechia)”, *Geoscape* 12, no.1 (2018), 62.

<sup>171</sup> Libor Běčák, “Včelařské muzeum v Chlebovicích slaví 25 let, medometů má asi nejvíce na světě” [“Beekeeping Museum in Chlebovice celebrates 25 years, it has probably most honey extractors in the world”], *Polar televize*, *polar.cz*, published 6 March 2020, last accessed 19 May 2024, <https://polar.cz/zpravy/moravskoslezsky-kraj/cely-ms-kraj/11000019398/vcelarske-muzeum-v-chlebovicich-slavi-25-let-medometu-ma-asi-nejvice-na-svete>.

The Beekeeping Museum is part of an old, reconstructed reeve's manor. I visited the museum in April 2024 and conducted an interview with the guide Miroslav Zátopek, who has been working in the museum since 2010. Another invaluable resource for the historical timeline of the building's destiny and museum's activities is the collection of personal memories and photographs *Beekeeping Museum in the Changes of Time*, which was published in 2020 at the occasion of 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the museum's establishment. Before 1986, as the manor was slowly decomposing, the inhabitants held a public referendum about the fate of the building, and eventually decided to save it. In 1986, local beekeepers Bohumír Haleš and Josef Kopeček met up with the authorities and discussed the use of the building for the purposes of a local beekeeping association. The material for the reconstruction, which ended in 1992, was funded by the town of Frýdek-Místek, but the physical labour was executed by local volunteers, which consisted of beekeepers and members of the other local clubs. On 1 May 1995, the Beekeeping Museum was inaugurated by dedicating one of the rooms in the manor to a collection of beekeeping objects, where it was located until 2007. Reconceptualization of the exhibition was actualized in 2007 under the eye of a caretaker Marie Knödllová, after a public artistic competition *Bees=Life* was organised by the local beekeepers' association in Frýdek-Místek, which were to be shown in the attic space of the manor, together with the previously exhibited collection of objects. After another successful reconstruction, which also included the building of a garden apiary, the attic was successfully refurbished, and the exhibition was opened to the public and remains in this space up to this day. The manor hosted 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the functioning of the Frýdek-Místek beekeepers' association, producing a celebratory flag, beekeeping costumes, commemorative medals, and planting a tulip tree in the garden. In the following years, the museum hosted summer schools for children, international volunteer workcamps, children's beekeeping club, or built an educational

beekeeping route around Chlebovice, all largely due to Knödlová's involvement. The garden also features historical collection of beehives, figurative beehives, and a podium, where concerts and performances for the local community take place.

As mentioned, the display is located in the right part of the manor's attic. The room is large and full of objects related to beekeeping. There are different types of beehives, including the historical skep or figurative hives, tens of homemade honey extractors, posters, medals, wax votives, decorated gingerbreads, and plethora of beekeeping equipment. The room is dominated by the large wall fresco which states BEES=LIFE. Even though the collection holds important memories of the developments of Czech beekeeping and speaks of the skill and inventiveness of Czech beekeepers, the objects are entirely decontextualised – there are no tags or descriptions which would tell of their histories or uses. Despite the general knowledgeableness of the guide, when asked about the origin of some objects, he simply expressed that he does not know but presumes that they come from all over the country. This is not an expression of criticism towards the kind individual thanks to whom I visited the museum, but rather an observation regarding how easily the original contexts of and communities around objects are forgotten when they are not preserved and cared for. The museum has no catalogue or depository. Moreover, objects from different time periods are placed next to each other with no information about dating – for example, Maria Theresa's beekeeping patent from 18<sup>th</sup> century is displayed close to posters from the period of socialist industrialisation of agriculture. The only panel at the exhibition speaks of beekeeping history, but the timeline ends with year 1864 when the first beekeeping association was established in Chrudim.<sup>172</sup> In conclusion, what is presented is consequently an ahistorical and incoherent simplification of the craft, reduced to its technological gadgets and final material products. The

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<sup>172</sup> Museum of Beekeeping in Chlebovice display.



garden acts as an open-air continuation of the museum, offering learning opportunities based on experience in the outdoor apiary and including panels about pollinators and biodiversity. However, at the time when I visited, there were no bees, and the apiary was empty. Continued personal and professional conflicts in the village between different clubs could pose barriers to the future successful functioning of the museum.



*Figure 11 Museum of Chlebovice, Czech Republic*

A further note must be made about the other part of the attic, which is dedicated to the Museum of Chlebovice and which demonstrates strong attachment to the place and local history. A rich collection of letters, books, paintings, archival photographs, and historical objects tells the story of the people of Chlebovice and their ancestors. It gives a unique insight into influences of political and social changes on the life in the village, devotes space to important citizens and their

familiar stories or recreates a traditional lodging and clothes of the region. The observe a paradox – the collection of the Beekeeping Museum is presented in the context of a rural village, in strong relation to the local history, yet in a region of mining and metal processing industry, detached from its national history. This underlines the fragmentation of Czech national identity and reinforces the absence of a shared (beekeeping) heritage.

#### 4.2.2 Bee World in Hulice



Figure 12 Renovated school housing interactive exhibition World of Bees in Hulice<sup>173</sup>

<sup>173</sup> Source: <http://www.vcelisvet.cz/fotogalerie/expozice/>.



Figure 13 Walk-in honeycomb, part of the display for the 'World of Bees' exhibit, Hulice<sup>174</sup>

Hulice is a small village in Central Bohemian Region, approximately 70 kilometres from Prague and with around 300 inhabitants. The interactive modern exhibition Bee World is housed in a building of an old school, which was built in 1901 and is up to this day owned by the municipality. After it stopped functioning as a school in 1978, it worked as a cinema and administrative depository of books and other archivals, but was slowly decaying and overall, in a frail state. After a successful grant application for a regional grant programme in 2008, the reconstruction started and in July 2012, the Bee World was opened as a display familiarizing their visitors with bees and the environment, with hopes of development of tourism and interest in the region. The initiator of the project was the then deputy mayor and beekeeper Oldřich Doležal. For the purposes of this thesis, I conducted an interview in May 2024 with Jana Šimková, the

<sup>174</sup> Source: <http://www.vcelisvet.cz/fotogalerie/expozice/>.



coordinator of the exhibition and a guide working in the museum. The website of the museum tells of the exhibition that “it intentionally leaves out typical museum artifacts and focuses more on the possibilities of technological innovation. People can walk through a giant honeycomb, look at the anatomy of bees on interactive screens, or play sounds from the beehive.”<sup>175</sup> As observed by Šimková, “[t]he exposition was modern since the beginning. It daringly left historical objects to ‘older’ museums and gave space to modern technologies...with its authenticity it immerses visitors through all their senses in the amazing world of bees.”<sup>176</sup> Indeed, the reconstructed building and exhibition invite the visitors to experience, rather than just observe. The reception works also as a shop with bee products, where one can buy honey, cosmetics or wax candles from local beekeepers. The main hall also occasionally serves as a community space for meetings of locals, examples of which can be annual Easter celebrations or a recent baby-welcoming ceremony of the village Hulice, which took place in November 2023.<sup>177</sup>

The first part of the exhibition on the ground floor introduces the biology, life cycle of the bee, division of roles and communication within the bee family. The life-like models of hollow trees also show how wild bees create their combs. Šimková pointed out that the whole display is interactive – the visitors are encouraged to touch and smell with the museum objects. On the second floor, one can walk through a wooden honeycomb and in individual cells learn about different bee products which are produced in the beehive. It is also possible to interact with the

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<sup>175</sup> “About Us”, *Bee World in Hulice Website*, last accessed 9 May 2024, <http://www.vcelisvet.cz/o-nas/>.

<sup>176</sup> Jana Šimková, “Looking back to the first ten years of Bee World Hulice”, *Czech Beekeepers’ Association*, published 1 March 2023, last accessed 9 May 2024, <https://www.vcelarstvi.cz/casopis/ohlednuti-za-prvnimi-deseti-lety-expozice-vceli-svet-hulice/>.

<sup>177</sup> “Vítání občánků” can literally be translated to “Welcoming of small citizens”. It signifies a secular ritual which was introduced by Communist regime to stand in for baptism. Babies were welcomed to the socialist life of the municipality by both parents and other citizens. The ritual survived the revolution and democratization and came to signify a moment of transition for parents. A very observant resource exploring the political, social and cultural significance of the ceremony before and after 1989 is the Master’s thesis defended by Kristina Šváblová in 2023 at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Charles University, Prague.

honey extractor or guess types of pollen in a quiz. The opposing wall offers an overview of the equipment used by beekeepers. The next room offers an area for rest and a screening of film dedicated to life of bees, as well as a display dedicated to bee diseases, featuring a microscope with eggs infected with bee parasite varroa and variety of medicine. However, the exhibition does not end inside as the garden also provides space for learning, with its fruit trees, observatory glass-enclosed beehives, solitary bee house, herb garden and educational walking path. The garden is also often transformed into a place of community, for example during December, when people in the village gather for the lighting up of the Christmas tree. The visitors are primarily children who visit the museum during school trips with their teachers, families, or foreigners from countries such as Slovenia or Poland. With some disappointment, Šimková observes that even after more than ten years of activities, surprisingly despite coming occasionally for the special events, the locals are not too interested in the museum and in some cases, consider it a nuisance that the heritage site is there – in particular due to the amount of traffic the visitors produce in the village, which is not accessible by public transport, except for a local bus. A comparison with the House of Carniolan Bee in Višnja Gora is relevant here – both institutions are located in a reachable distance from the capital of the country, they are both in former reconstructed schools, and they offer a participatory modern display showcasing beekeeping. However, the interest of the local community and beekeepers is strikingly different – whilst in Slovenia the institution becomes a source of pride and joy, in the Czech Republic it is perceived more as an infliction on the village life, despite the efforts of the museum to involve the locals.

Despite the limited interaction with the residents, the museum is able to survive and provide meaningful educational programmes and present new objects and temporary exhibitions, such as the current display “Magic of the Bee Kingdom”, a series of macrophotographs of a photographer

Veronika Souralová. A new display dedicated to the Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) will be opened in 2024 as a reaction to the invasion of the species threatening bee populations in Europe. The museum also has a number of collaborations in the region, such as a shared calendar or collaborative programme during museum nights with the nearby Water House, a participatory museum which educates the public about significance of water reserves Želivka and Švihov and raises awareness of environmental changes. Šimková mentioned that they also coordinate with groups and tours, who are invited to visit both institutions. Additionally, partnerships with Czech Beekeepers' Association, touristic organisation Region of Blaník Knights and National Agricultural Museum gives way to additional promotions and networking. The programmes offered to the visitors in the Bee World include guided visits, creative workshops with wax such as candle making or wax painting, gingerbread cookies painting, lectures about apitherapy and bee products, or so-called “project days”, during which the focus is on combining sensory experiences with the theoretical knowledge about beekeeping. During this programme, students are greeted with honey breakfast, are welcome to observe the bees living in the beehive, get to know the herbs and flowers in the garden and learn about different types of pollinators. The foci of this beekeeping presentation are sensory experiences the display offers and use of modern technology in museum setting, as well as educating about biodiversity and importance of bees for nature and climate. In 2020, the project received a prize Patria Nostra for an outstanding development in a rural area, and it continues to attract both national and international audiences.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Jana Šimková, “Looking back to the first ten years of Bee World Hulice”, *Czech Beekeepers' Association*, published 1 March 2023, last accessed 9 May 2024, <https://www.vcelarstvi.cz/casopis/ohlednuti-za-prvnimi-deseti-lety-expozice-vceli-svet-hulice/>.

## 5. Beekeeping in Cities and Recommendations for Implementation of Urban Bee Path

### 5.1 The Bee Path in Ljubljana



*Figure 14 Beekeeper operating rooftop beehives on the Patrol Company's building in Ljubljana, Slovenia*



Figure 15 Part of Bee Path - Observatory beehive in the University Botanical Gardens in Ljubljana, Slovenia

The Bee Path in Ljubljana was opened in 2015, and later became the main impetus in the establishment of the *Bee Path Net* and the *Bee Path Cities Network* which connected several European metropolises and towns and encouraged them in development of own Bee Paths. It is an important project built in cooperation with the Urban Beekeepers' Association, making the adaptations and changes in the beekeeping tradition visible, and introducing visitors to the beekeeping heritage in an urban environment. According to Maruška Markovčič, the project's initiator, it was first initiated as a touristic project, but it grew into a movement and a network which gave way to new enterprises in the city, such as mowing only when the bees have eaten, a swarm emergency line, service to rent a hive or planting of honey plants on the rooftops of bus



stops in Slovenska cesta.<sup>179</sup> The Municipality of Ljubljana is home to around 800 farms, and more than 4500 hives.<sup>180</sup> It became the European Green Capital in 2016 and it received the title of the Most Bee-Friendly Municipality from the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association for the third time in 2022.<sup>181</sup> It is important to acknowledge it as an effective way of illustrating the importance of the presence of bees for the green image of sustainability Ljubljana embodies. In the following paragraph, I will briefly summarize the way beekeeping is presented on the Ljubljana Bee Path as well as the agents included in this network.

The Bee Path is not merely a physical enterprise, it is also a system of beekeepers and organisations with interest in beekeeping in the city. The authors describe the bee path as outgrowing its original idea and representing a physical path, a network, an educational programme, a think-tank and an incubator, and a movement.<sup>182</sup> This both enhances and simplifies the internal interaction of organizations in Ljubljana, as well as the external interaction of the visitors with beekeeping heritage. The brochure for the Bee Path includes different categories through which beekeeping heritage is practiced and promoted in the capital, as well as a map if one wants to discover them whilst walking in Ljubljana. I sum these up in the following table.

	<i>Examples of what/who is included in the category</i>
Beekeepers	Individuals who are beekeeping in Ljubljana
Cultural Institutions	House of Jože Plečnik, Slovenian Ethnographic Museum
Catering Establishments	Restaurants that use urban honey

<sup>179</sup> Personal interview with Maruška Markovčič, the initiator of the Bee Path Ljubljana from the Municipal Office of Ljubljana. Conducted in April 2023.

<sup>180</sup> "Ljubljana, the Most Bee-Friendly Municipality," CEEweb for Biodiversity, published 30 August 2023, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://www.ceeweb.org/article.php?id=713>.

<sup>181</sup> "Ljubljana is once again the Most Bee-Friendly Municipality," City of Ljubljana Website, published 1 December 2022, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://www.ljubljana.si/en/news/ljubljana-is-once-again-the-most-bee-friendly-municipality/>.

<sup>182</sup> Klemen Srtmšnik et al., The evolution toward a bee-friendly city" (Ljubljana: Mestna občina Ljubljana, 2021), 2-3.

Shops	Medex, local outdoor market
Cultural Heritage	St. Nicholas Church, Medarska Street <sup>183</sup>
Biodiversity	Green initiatives of the city – honey plants, green spaces on bus stops
Educational Institutions	Botanical Garden of Ljubljana University with observatory beehive
Members of Bee Path Network in Ljubljana	Independent private companies, groups and associations with own educational and promotional programmes related to beekeeping

*Table 5 Components of Bee Path in Ljubljana*

Bee Path Project is in partnership with the Tourist Association of Ljubljana for those who prefer to book a guided tour. Bee Path is an example of a truly holistic presentation of beekeeping heritage and its contemporary demonstrations. The walk is not prescribed, and the choice regarding interaction with the heritage is left to the visitor. All sites can be visited in one day, because Ljubljana is a small and accessible city. However, the Bee Path's very complexity can also result in information and possibility overload of for both Slovenian and non-Slovenian visitors, reducing the accessibility of the actual walk.

## 5.2. Recommendations for Implementation of an Urban Bee Path

The Bee Path in Ljubljana can be interpreted as a successful project of transmission of beekeeping heritage. Beekeeping is presented as intertwined and inseparable with its urban landscape and people. The tradition is portrayed from different viewpoints and connected with other topics, as shown in the table above. Slovenian individuals, collectives and communities are informed about and can become part of the initiative, creating a regularly meeting community in the city caring for beekeeping heritage and creation of rich environment for the bees. Due to recent developments in global and Slovenian apitourism, tourists can also easily access information in

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<sup>183</sup> From „med“ – honey.

the Information Centre or on the website of the City of Ljubljana and learn about life of bees in the city. A successful pioneer of the Bee Path project, the Municipality of Ljubljana helped with construction of bee paths in several other countries, for example in Portugal, Italy, Poland, or Hungary. In this last part of my thesis, inspired by the Ljubljana bee path and based on the previous analyses of Slovenian and Czech identity and beekeeping transmission practices, I would like to provide a series of recommendations for an urban bee path implementation. Once again, I reflect that the Slovenian heritage transmission system cannot be simply replicated in diametrically different context such as the Czech Republic, but I do believe some methodologies can be transferred to strengthen the Czech awareness of beekeeping as a discipline not only agricultural, but also primarily environmental and cultural. In the next section, I specifically apply these to the environment of Prague and propose several stops which could serve as a basis for a future bee path project. However, recommendations in this section can be applied to any city in the Czech Republic, and when relevant, might also be applied in preparation of educational projects related to beekeeping heritage in non-urban environments.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. A multi-level management structure should be established for the project.** Slovenian case shows that collaboration of different governmental and non-governmental partners provides frameworks for heritage care which are not dependent on individuals only, which is necessary for sustainable heritage transmission.

**2. Collaborative approach with local communities, beekeepers, and museums.** Educational programme should be created not for people, but with people. Focus should be on sensory learning and provision of personal experiences with bees. Both Slovenian and Czech cases show a strong attachment and interest of people in local memories and histories,

as illustrated by essentially all examples of musealisation, except for the case of Hulice. Locals are more motivated to visit the institution if they are involved in the programming, and from the case of Višnja Gora, we can see that they are excited to share their personal experiences and participate in creation of memory institutions.

**3. Stories should be told thorough the project. Stories of beekeepers, landscapes, and bees. Continuity with history of the area should be established when creating a bee path, encouraging intergenerational learning and transmission. Stories of marginalised or unrepresented individuals should be foregrounded, in relation to beekeeping heritage specifically of female beekeepers, which have been historically underrepresented in the male-dominated industry.<sup>184</sup>**

**4. The network created around the project should be based on long-term relationship building and continuous collaboration. Monthly meetings are advised for evaluation and discussion of improvements in the project.**

**5. Additional programmes should be developed in relation with the project, such as guided group visits and walks, lectures with experts, community gardening, baking with honey, apitherapeutic workshops, etc.**

**6. The project should not be limited to physical access and visit. People should still be able to learn and participate through engaging with website and social media.**

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<sup>184</sup> According to Josef Lojda, the director of the Nasavrky Beekeeping School, who was interviewed in April 2023 for the purposes of this thesis, in the last twenty years the ratio of male-female students changed from 10:1 to 2:1. Narratives about women being weak, unable to lift beehives, historical legislation forbidding women from joining associations prevented their involvement in the tradition. This is changing, and therefore those stories must be brought to the foreground to motivate empowerment of women in general and deconstruction of patriarchal social discourses.

### 5.3. Bee Path Prague



*Figure 16 Urban beehive in front of the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague*

The bees living in Prague are tended to by around 1000 beekeepers.<sup>185</sup> Around half of them are organised under Czech Beekeepers' Association, some are part of neighbourly clubs, and some practice beekeeping independently.<sup>186</sup> Beehives can be found both in the historical city centre, in green parks, or on the rooftops of theatres, museum and shopping centres. For example, beekeepers Alena and Pavel Mach are responsible for bees on the rooftops of Palác Anděl, Václav Havel

<sup>185</sup> Zuzana Machálková, "Přibývá městských včelařů, v Praze jich je téměř tisícovka. Med z města může být kvalitnější než z venkova," [There are more beekeepers, almost a thousand in Prague. Honey from the city can be of higher quality than from rural areas]. *Prague Radio Website*, published 20 June 2023, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://praha.rozhlas.cz/pribyva-mestskych-vcelaru-v-praze-jich-je-temer-tisicovka-med-z-mesta-muze-byt-9017991>.

<sup>186</sup> "Association of Prague beekeepers," *Beekeepers Prague Website*, last accessed 24 May 2024, <http://vcelaripraha.cz/vybor-prazskych-vcelaru/>.



Airport, Agricultural Museum, or City Tower.<sup>187</sup> Beekeeper Anna Vodrážková keeps so-called ‘National’ bees in cooperation with the National Theatre, close to their depository in the neighbourhood of Vinohrady.<sup>188</sup> Similar to Ljubljana, due to the lack of pesticides and high levels of biodiversity in the city, the urban honey from Prague is nutritious and of high quality. Honey from bees living in the Petřín Park, taken care of by Dagmar Šormová, won the annual competition Honey of the Year for three consecutive years from 2015 to 2017.<sup>189</sup> Latest member of the Prague bee cityscape is the student club Pučmeloud from the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague, who revitalised the natural landscape around the faculty building and created a community garden.<sup>190</sup> However, as in the rest of the country, the interactions between beekeepers are limited mostly to their neighbourhoods and districts. There is no obligation to be part of any city association, and therefore unless one intentionally searches for engagement with other practitioners, beekeeping remains a solo activity. The lack of common platform for sharing information and for socialization causes disconnection from others and poses barriers to prevention of bee diseases.

In my planning, I refer to the conceptualisation of Bee Path Prague as a wide network of agents caring for beekeeping heritage, rather than a prescribed way of engaging with the urban space. In this project, I want to raise awareness of the widespread presence of bees and other

<sup>187</sup> “Včely na střechách: realizované projekty” [Bees on rooftops: Realized projects], *Bees of Rooftops Website*, last accessed 24 May 2024. <https://vcelynastrechach.cz/vcely/>.

<sup>188</sup> Zuzana Machálková, “Přibývá městských včelařů, v Praze jich je téměř tisícovka. Med z města může být kvalitnější než z venkova,” [There are more beekeepers, almost a thousand in Prague. Honey from the city can be of higher quality than from rural areas]. *Prague Radio Website*, published 20 June 2023, last accessed 24 May 2024, <https://praha.rozhlas.cz/pribyva-mestskych-vcelaru-v-praze-jich-je-temer-tisicovka-med-z-mesta-muze-byt-9017991>.

<sup>189</sup> Lukáš Horn, “Včelařka z Prahy: Nenajdete tu žádné pesticidy, proto je med nejlepší” [Beekeeper from Prague: You will find no pesticides here, which is why the honey is the best], *iDNES.cz*, published 17 August 2018, last accessed 24 May 2024, [https://www.idnes.cz/hobby/mazlicci/dagmar-sormova-vcely-med-roku-petrin.A180627\\_154334\\_hobby-mazlicci\\_mce](https://www.idnes.cz/hobby/mazlicci/dagmar-sormova-vcely-med-roku-petrin.A180627_154334_hobby-mazlicci_mce).

<sup>190</sup> The name of the club refers to a character from a book by Jiří Kahoun Příběhy včelích medvídků [Stories of Bumble Bees], which was adapted into a popular TV cartoon. He is a big forest bumblebee who the smaller bees and insects are afraid of.

pollinators in the city. However, the focus of this presentation should not be material. As apparent from the analyses made in this thesis, the Czech heritage context has seen a surplus of projects focused on the materiality of beekeeping heritage and bee products. Whilst these aspects remain an important part of holistic understanding of beekeeping, it is necessary to bring forth the historical and social realm of this heritage. The aim of the Bee Path Prague is to create a community in the city which would work together on raising awareness of climate change and biodiversity by speaking about beekeeping pasts, presents and futures. The first step to start the project would be to activate interest of stakeholders and initiate conversations with beekeepers, municipal officials, cultural organisations, community gardeners, and neighbourhood organisations. Ideally, several walkable paths would be developed both in the old city centre and in the outskirts of Prague in cooperation with local residents, kindergartens and primary and secondary schools. Museums, cultural centres, and beekeeping clubs for children will be an important agent in promotion of the project and reaching the target audiences, which would be primarily families with children, students, and tourists. In the following table, I provide an overview of several of these agents which could help with the initial stage of the programme, having expressed an interest in transmitting beekeeping heritage through their existing projects and exhibitions and already having created relationship with audiences intrigued by this heritage. I believe that there are many more interested and interesting organisations and individuals who could participate and hope to initiate these conversations after this thesis project, with both the practitioners and the policy makers in Prague.

Site	Justifiacion
Palace Platýz	The first association of Czech beekeepers was established in the Café Platýz in 1872. It was in important place for mingling of Prague inhabitants. Since then, the historical café has ceased to exist, but a new one was set up in 2002. It serves as a reminder of importance of beekeeping socialization and organisation.

The Vojanovy Gardens	The park in the historical centre Lesser Town features three figurative beehives, where visitors can observe interaction of people with bees. There is a small lake and a variety of melliferous tress, plants and animals. It illustrates the importance of connection between bees and biodiversity.
Petřín Gardens	The large park features many melliferous plants and trees, and is a significant green area in the centre of Prague where people often socialize. The honey coming from bees living in this park was chosen as the best honey in the country for three times, so it would be a point of the Bee Path where visitors can learn about the emergence and importance of urban beekeeping and biodiversity.
National Agricultural Museum	The agricultural museum is an important contributor to discourse about Czech beekeeping heritage. There are two beehives on the rooftop on the museum, giving way to a variety of possible educational programmes which are focused on the sensory and embodied experiences connected to beekeeping. The museum can connect actual practitioners with the general public and offer lectures and non-formal programmes for both adults and children, mediating intergenerational interactions and exchanges. This will support the overcoming of the Czech historical focus on materiality of beekeeping, and rather provide first-hand experience.
Beekeepers' Association of Prague 6	The neighbourhood association of Prague 6 offers programme for both expert beekeepers and the general public. They provide workshops associated with apitherapy, honey degustations, or for example making of historical skep beehives out of straw. Visitors can freely interact with beekeepers, which would be a valuable contribution to the Bee Path. It is an example of a place where the past meets the present, where audiences can see the living tradition, and where they can pick to become part of it by participating in workshops and trainings.
National Theatre	The building of the National Theatre is familiar to every visitor to Prague. It is located next to the river and holds importance in the processes of Czech identity building, as the original building was funded by Czech nationalists in 19 <sup>th</sup> century. The theatre keeps bees and offers educational programmes with a beekeeper. It is a point of connection of bee world and the world of culture and art, a place of the Bee Path where conversations about bee presence in literature and mythology could take place, which would be especially interesting for kindergartens and primary schools in the area.
Ecological centre Prales	The ecological centre in the neighbourhood of Kbely, which was established in 2016, is a place where visitors can attend



	workshops and lectures related to environmental education and natural protection. In 2021, a community beehive area was established in the eco centre, close to forests, fields and garden with melliferous flowers. Educational path related to forests and wood is also located at the centre.
Botanical Garden Trója	The botanical garden features an outside interactive exposition related to not only bees, but also various types of insects and pollinators. A special field with only melliferous flowers was planted next to the bee house. There is also a seating area for the visitors and playground for children which is themed around beekeeping. An important part is the fruit grove with almond, pear, or apple trees.
Student Club Pučmeloud at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague	The newly established student club shows the raising interest of young people in the world of bees. The club collaborates with other student associations and built a sustainable garden next to the building of the Faculty of Humanities, where workshops related to gardening, ornithology and craft disciplines take place. Involvement of young people is going to be a crucial part of the project, to integrate intergenerational exchanges as part of the network.

*Table 6 Proposed starting agents for the Bee Path Prague*

## 6. Beekeeping Futures and Final Remarks

To educate about beekeeping is to be a storyteller, to tell stories of how humans and bees enter each other's lives, and how this ancient relationship has changed. It has been changing rapidly in the recent decades, just as the climate and environment has been changing. In this project, I told the stories of Slovenia and the Czech Republic and their beekeepers. Lands of both are intertwined with memories of beekeeping in both rural and urban areas, and people feel deeply connected to this discipline and tradition. I showed that both Slovenia and the Czech Republic are recently established nations, and that despite their many similarities, they went through largely different processes of nationalisation and self-conceptualisation. Slovenian detachment from Yugoslavia and ideals of pan-Slavism coincided with a formulation of a strong nationalist programme, which highlighted the uniqueness of Slovenian history, traditions, and landscapes, in order to construct the image of the Slovenian nation as part of Europe. The Czech Republic has

for centuries been trying to formulate its national identity, usually in opposition to external nations and influences, but it is still unclear what this identity is. The period of Communism and the rapid transformation and democratization of the country after 1989 revolution meant radically opposing impositions of national identities, values, and expectations on the Czech people. As a result of these processes, the people of the country remain divided through their experiences and beliefs, rather than united as a community which shares a common past and heritage. However, more research and space must be dedicated to this topic in the academic field, and I would encourage further explorations especially in relation to the cultural sector. Processes of nation and identity building have also transformed the ways people understand and relate to their heritage and memories. In present Slovenia, people feel mostly proud of their natural and cultural heritage, as illustrated by the recent UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List of Humanity nomination “Beekeeping in Slovenia – a way of life”, emergence and professionalisation of apitherapy and apitourism, and the successful multi-level beekeeping heritage management and transmission system. In the Czech Republic, relationship to the past is more complicated and ambiguous. Beekeeping is a popular discipline, and the interest has been increasing even more, but in comparison to Slovenia, there is a lack of continuity with the past memories of the tradition. Conversely, it seems to be perceived as a largely technical industry which places value on the agricultural production and the material practice, rather than on the positive effects it can have on communities and on the natural environment.

In the second chapter of my thesis, I looked at the Slovenian beekeeping heritage transmission system on the international, national and local level. Activities executed on the international level are particularly successful, aligning with the image of Slovenia as progressive and environmentally friendly land. After being approved by the United Nations and the Food and

Agriculture Organisation, the World Bee Day became an internationally celebrated holiday, acknowledged by beekeepers' associations, local clubs and museums, and appropriated by companies who are seemingly adopting agendas of sustainability and environmental friendliness. The Slovenian Beekeeping Academy promotes Slovenian knowledge and beekeeping technology all over the world, further promoting Slovenian beekeeping heritage through intergovernmental cooperations. I interpret this use of heritage as 'bee diplomacy', which would not be possible without a strong discourse around the Slovenian tradition also on national and local levels. The Slovenian Beekeepers' Association ensures the promotion of beekeeping heritage on national level, through cooperations with schools and branches of beekeeping clubs. The members of local associations often meet and unite and promote the agenda of the central association in their own community. The two initiatives which I analysed in this thesis are Slovenian Honey Breakfast and Day of Planting Honey Plants, but there are many more educational and interactive programmes developed by the association. Important heritage agents are the local museums in Radovljica and Višnja Gora. The former is defined by its long history and roots in the region and collaboration with local communities and beekeepers in the preparation of the exhibition, presenting beekeeping heritage holistically as a complex system, which considered beyond the natural and cultural and tangible and intangible dichotomies. The House of the Carniolan Bee is relatively new and has attracted interest from international and national visitors. It established itself not only as a centre for transmission of beekeeping heritage, but also a community centre for locals to spend time together, unite and meet in a modern and renovated environment, supplying a sense of pride in telling and retelling of local histories. We can conclude that the Slovenian beekeeping heritage management is strongly supported by the national government, by both Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Agriculture, which allows for a deep involvement of various institutions and

communities and therefore creates centralised, yet widespread transmission of beekeeping heritage. As illustrated by the successful UNESCO nomination, this system is well-functioning and seems to effectively preserve beekeeping heritage within wider frameworks for both tangible and intangible beekeeping protection.

The third chapter endeavoured to adopt a similar approach in the context of the beekeeping heritage transmission in the Czech Republic. This is complicated by the general fragmentations of identity and subsequent decentralised heritage care system. The fractions of beekeeping associations, each with their own local identity, history, in addition to differing levels of involvement and interest of the local communities, results in lack of national conceptualisation of beekeeping heritage and impossibility of conducting an exhaustive and comprehensive study. Moreover, the discipline is understood through the lens of tangibleness and production, rather than through the lens of history or heritage. Due to this fact, disciplines and crafts which are defined by intangible aspects of heritage are slowly disappearing and their histories are being forgotten. The Czech beekeeping heritage transmission is secured through two beekeeping vocational schools, one in Nasavrky and one in Blatná. These modes of transmissions again foreground the technical aspects of the discipline and overlook its history and its possible transmission. However, they also unite beekeepers in communities and help with keeping the bees healthy and beekeepers skilled. Recently, apitherapeutic classes and workshops are also being offered in these centres, showcasing the changes in demand and interest of both beekeepers and their audiences, which provides some hope for future beekeeping heritage transmission projects. In other words, people are interested in this forgotten history, and in the social and cultural potential that it holds for Czech communities. This is illustrated also by the rising number of local projects of musealisation of beekeeping heritage. Both of my chosen case studies illustrate the focus on materiality, but also high level of

attachment to local history. Unfortunately, the upkeep and preservation of these memories is still largely dependent on individuals, unlike in Slovenia, which is not sustainable in the long term.

By analysing the Bee Path in Ljubljana, a successful example of transmission of urban beekeeping heritage, and combining those observations with previous analyses, in the last chapter I developed a series of recommendations which I believe should be followed during implementation of an urban bee path in the Czech Republic. I also offered a list of organisations which could support this project in Prague, institutions which have previously addressed beekeeping heritage and contextualised it through interdisciplinary perspectives, connecting it to biodiversity, community, or other crafts. I would like to continue working on this project and develop a network which would speak about the history of beekeeping in Prague, and connect it to the present and futures which we can through beekeeping achieve by raising awareness about climate change and building positive relationships with the environment. I believe this heritage can bring us closer together and provide grounds for interactions with nature and with other people. In other words, we must continue talking to each other, reflect on our pasts and how they defined us. It is my understanding and conclusion that when this happens in the Czech Republic, people will understand themselves and their bees better, and will be able to create more effective transmission projects.

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