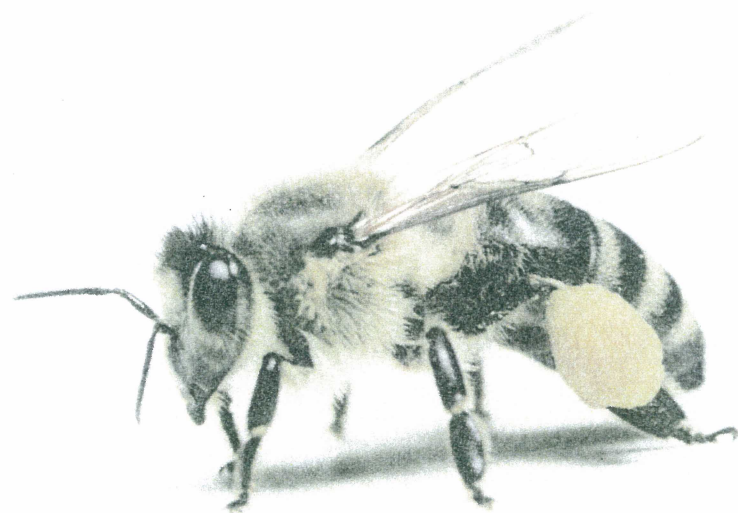


No Bees, No Life



Peter Kozmus, Boštjan Noč and Karolina Vrtačnik
together with the 66 most important names
in the field of beekeeping from 32 countries



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Anton Janša, a Beekeeping Teacher

Anton Janša was born on 20 May 1734 in Breznica in Upper Carniola (Slovenia) as the third of nine children in an environment where beekeeping had been well-developed for several centuries. The Kuhars, as was the traditional proper name of their house, were beekeepers by tradition. After his father's death in 1752, the oldest son, 18-year-old Anton, took over the bees. According to his writings, the bees caught his attention with their orderliness and diligence and so he started observing

them and discovering their secrets. Based on his findings, he improved the processes of raising bees and caring for them used in Upper Carniolan beekeeping that eventually developed into Janša's beekeeping practice. He was also a painter. In 1766, he and his brother Lovro enrolled in a copper engraving and painting school in Vienna and their brother Valentin joined them the year after. Both Janša's brothers later became professors at this school. Janša, however, never forgot about beekeeping and it is said that he brought 16 beehives with him to Vienna. In 1769, he responded to the call for applications by the Lower Austrian economic society searching for two master beekeepers. Janša already knew German at the time and was accepted as a beekeeper, approved by the empress Maria Theresa. That year, she established the first beekeeping school in Augarten that was the first Austrian agricultural school and the first beekeeping school in the world. In August of the very same year, Janša took bees to pasture on buckwheat at the Marchfeld and produced a large amount of honey. On 6 April 1770, the empress Maria Theresa appointed Anton Janša imperial and royal beekeeping teacher and travelling beekeeping teacher. He was the first beekeeping teacher in the world! The beekeeping school in Augarten held free classes from April to September. The theoretical part took place every day from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., while Janša was avail-

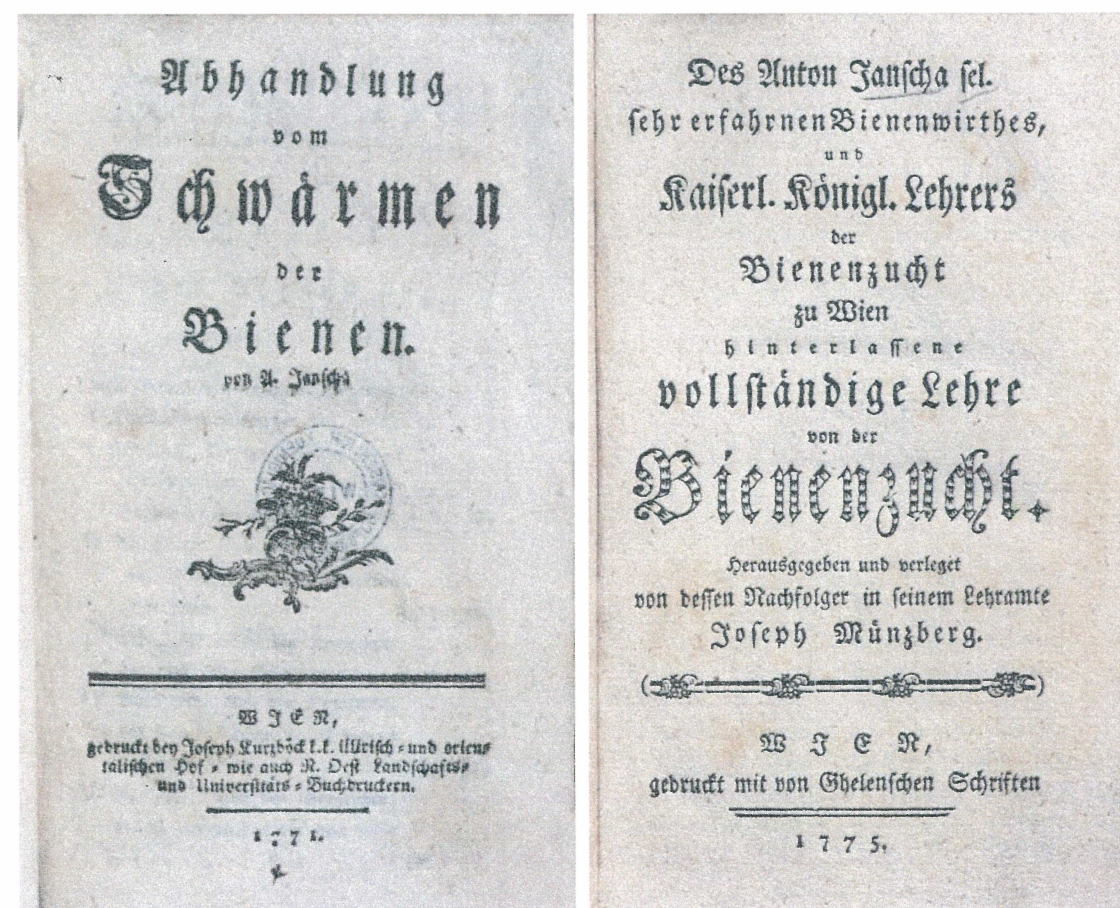


Božidar Jakac: Anton Janša (Published in the
Slovenian Beekeeping Dictionary, 2009)

Anton Janša was the first bee-
keeping teacher in the world!

able for questions, advice and practical demonstrations throughout the day. When autumn was near, at the end of July or the beginning of August, the school moved to the Marchfeld together with honey bees for the buckwheat pasture, which was not done in that environment before Janša, so they called it the Janša or the Carniolan technique. Janša and his beekeeping were at the centre of media attention and an article in *Realzeitung* from 4 March 1771 states that "in terms of beekeeping, the Duchy of Carniola has been ahead of other imperial and royal countries for several years now".

In the spring of 1770, Janša bought 16 beehives for educational purposes, to be able to demonstrate practical beekeeping work to his students. In 1771, he already had 66 beehives in his school apiary, and about 300 of them in 1772. The inheritance records after Janša's death state that he left behind 194 beehives. As mentioned above, Janša is said to have brought with him 16 wooden Carniolan beehives with bees from his home in Breznica. Carniolan honey bees from Upper Carniola were therefore at the beekeeping school in Augarten.



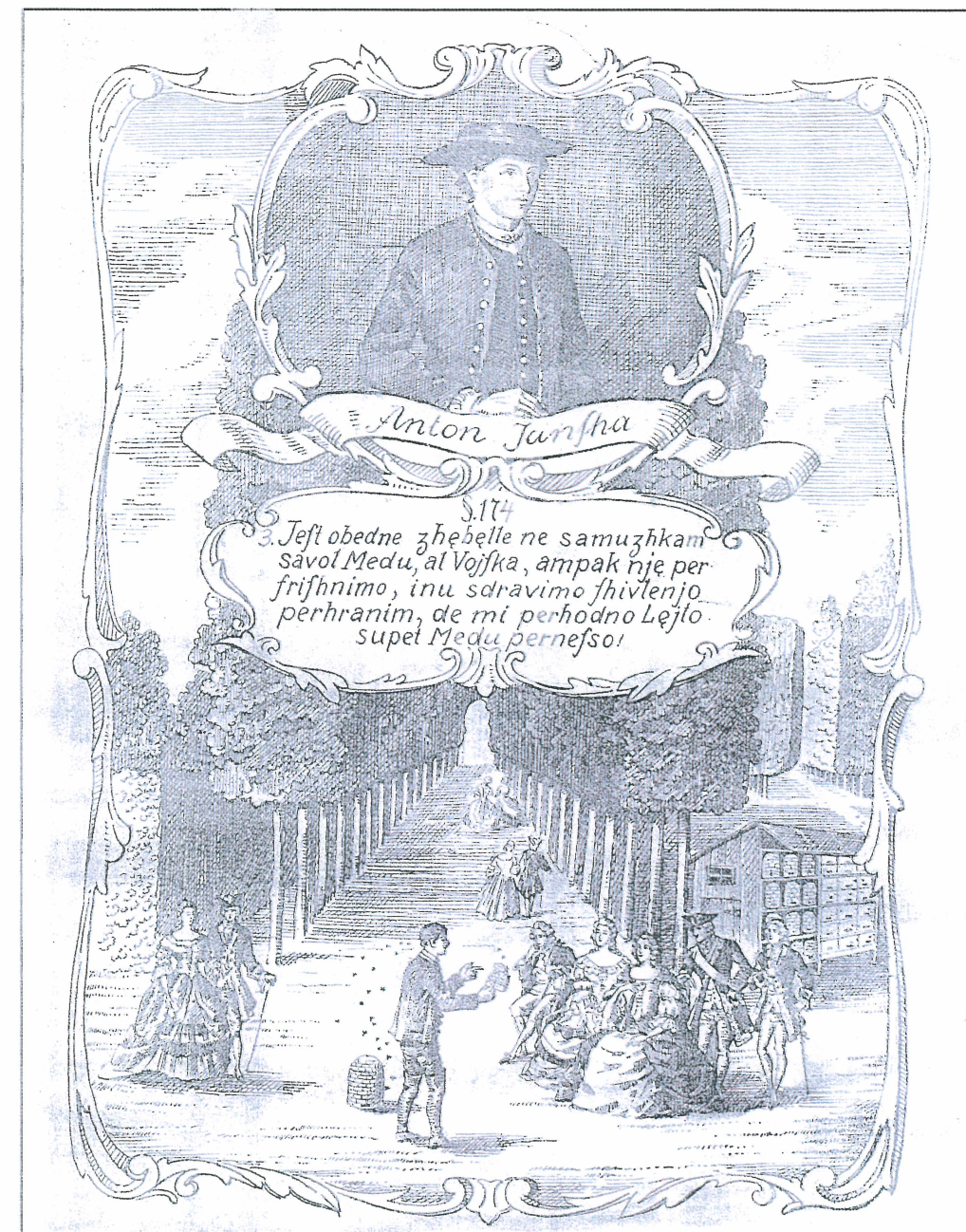
Both Janša's books are among the most important books of classic world beekeeping literature

Janša's beekeeping practice was based on the knowledge of Upper Carniolan beekeepers who used traditional wooden Carniolan beehives (so-called *kranjič*), painted beehive panels, knew Carniolan honey bees well, were the first in the world to know about queen bees mating with drones in the air, and took bees to pasture on special wagons. Janša dismissed wrong assumptions about drones, he knew the function of an individual member of the bee colony in the beehive and was among the pioneers of box hive beekeeping. Rihar (1994) wrote: *"Box beehives enabled Janša to preserve the integrity of the colony. He regulated the passion of bees to build and gather by expanding the volume of the beehive, thus preventing a swarming atmosphere. He expanded the beehive vertically with hive boxes, bottom superings and additions between two hive compartments. Because bees have a biological tendency to not leave any empty space in the middle, he prefers only one of these actions, inserting additions between two hive compartments. This is the main secret of his success."*

This is what Janša taught his wide audience while using his equipment (a swarm catcher and other objects). His beekeeping motto is well-known: *I do not kill bees to get honey and wax, I keep them strong and healthy, so they will bring me honey again next year.* Janša's beekeeping practice spread quickly, also because of his successful honey production, and he had a growing number of imitators. On 21 August 1773, *Realzeitung* reported that, in order to expand beekeeping, a reward of two imperial ducats would be given to every farmer in Lower Austria having at least fifteen beehives and following the excellent procedure of beekeeping teacher Janša by the end of April 1774.



There is a memorial plaque in Janša's memory in the Augarten park in Vienna. A "beekeeping" bicycle marathon from Vienna to Rače pri Mariboru was organised in 2016 under the direction of Maja Zupan. The participants were also welcomed by the Slovenian Ambassador in Vienna, Dr Andrej Rahten.



Janša teaching about beekeeping in Augarten

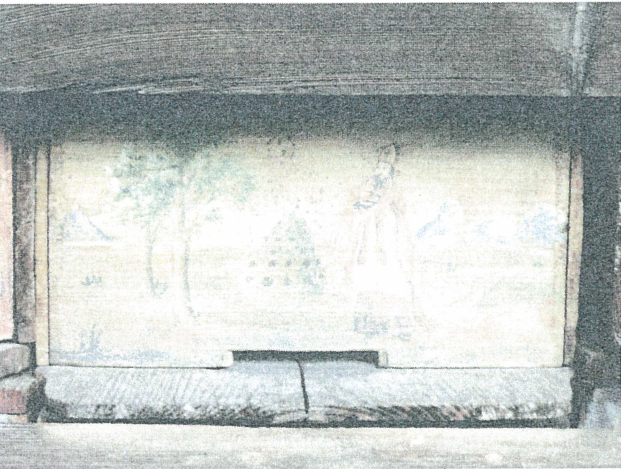
In 1773, Janša prepared a plan and a proposal for a beekeeping society, but they were not accepted. He also asked for an assistant, but the response to the request arrived only after his death. Janša died on 13 September 1773 due to fever and was buried at the cemetery of St Leopold Parish in Augarten.

He wrote two books or manuals in German:

- *Treatise on the Swarming of Bees* (1771)—editions: 1774, 1775 and 1925; translations: Polish, Hungarian, Czech, English and Slovenian.
- *Complete Guide to Beekeeping* (1775)—editions: 1777, 1790, 1807, 1994; translations in Slovenian (the first as soon as in 1792). It was published by Jožef Münzberg, Janša's student and the

new beekeeping teacher, two years after Janša's death. The manuscript was found among the objects he left behind.

Janša's students were messengers of his beekeeping practice as teachers at new beekeeping schools, where it was only allowed to teach by following the verified methods used by the first beekeeping teacher Janša (in Wiener Neustadt, Prague, Brno, Graz, Lviv and elsewhere), and authors of modern beekeeping books. Janša's beekeeping practice was presented in a book published in 1774 by Janša's student Kratzer with the motto "a new way of Austrian beekeeping". Among the most important of Janša's students were: Johan Avguštin Kratzer, J M Müller, Tomaž Wildman, Georg Rohmoser, Martin Kuralt, Franz Joseph Pösel, Johann Riem, Joseph Münzberg and others.



Saint Ambrose on a beehive panel at Janša's apiary (photo: Andrej Šalehar, Slovenia)



Working on the field; a beehive panel at Janša's apiary (photo: Andrej Šalehar, Slovenia)

I do not kill bees to get honey and wax,
I keep them strong and healthy, so they
will bring me honey again next year.

Quote from § 174 – Janša, Anton: Complete
Guide to Beekeeping

Janša's beekeeping practice also found its place in a beekeeping patent decreed by Maria Theresa on 8 April 1775. The second point of the new decree called *Lessons for Master Beekeepers* requires the verified principles of the first Vienna beekeeping teacher Janša to be observed when ordering apiaries with the necessary hives.

The basic starting point of Janša's beekeeping practice is the unwritten beekeeping knowledge and experience of Upper Carniolan farmers, completed by his search for the laws of biology, ways of beekeeping with Carniolan honey bees, and inventions. He passed down his knowledge and practical experience to numerous students and encouraged them, thus contributing to the development of modern beekeeping.

References are available on the following website: <https://beebooks.si/en/>.

Janša's apiary was renovated in 2003. The renovation was led by the Zgornja Gorenjska Beekeepers' Association in close cooperation with the Municipality of Žirovnica, starting with its Mayor Franc Pfajfar.

