

Beekeeping: Etymology and Toponomastics

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This article examines the most widespread apicultural terminology present in the Slavic linguistic territory, highlighting beekeeping as a key economic activity among the Slavs, both in their ancestral homeland and after their migrations to the west, north, and south. In addition to basic apicultural terminology, the article examines certain geographical names whose origins were motivated by beekeeping. The article sheds light on a part of Slavic toponymy, treating names based on the most widespread stems in Slavic territory. Two methods are used in analyzing words: the comparative method, whereby genetically identical lexical parallels are compared in living and dead languages, and reconstruction, whereby an original linguistic form is reconstructed, leading to the original meaning of a word and the original semantic motivation for meaning-bearing lexical units.

Indo-European and Slavic This article examines the most widespread apicultural terminology present in the Slavic linguistic territory, highlighting beekeeping as a key economic activity among the Slavs, both in their ancestral [homeland and after their migrations](#) to the west, north, and south. In addition to basic apicultural terminology, the article also examines certain geographical names whose origins were motivated by beekeeping. The article sheds light on a part of Slavic [toponymy](#), treating names based on the most widespread stems in the Slavic territory. Two methods are used in analyzing words: the comparative method, whereby genetically identical lexical parallels are compared in living and dead languages, and reconstruction, whereby an original linguistic form is reconstructed, leading to the original meaning of a word and the original semantic motivation for meaning-bearing lexical units. Determining the etymology of both apicultural terms and geographical names requires taking into account information from history, archaeology, ethnology, botany, zoology, and other disciplines that provide insight into the lifestyle of the Slavs and their activities.

Apicultural terminology

Designations for where bees live

The Slavic languages have a well-preserved apicultural terminology in their diverse lexicon, especially considering the fact that they were only committed to writing at a relatively late date. Apiculture was among the most important segments of economic development in the Middle Ages. The Slavs recognized the benefits of beekeeping early on, and from the very earliest times, they added honey to their [food](#) as a sweetener, used beeswax, and also produced mead (Kurtović 2010: 12). In northern Europe, a special form of woodland beekeeping developed with the arrival of the Slavs (Ru *bórtničestvo*, Br *bórtnictva*, Uk *bórtnyctvo*, Cz *brtnictví*, Sk *brtníctvo*, Po *bartnictwo*; see [Archaeology of Natural Beekeeping](#)). This involved the ancient practice of collecting honey from cavities hollowed out or carved into living tree trunks. The ancient Slavs generally practiced woodland beekeeping in the

expansive linden forests of northern and eastern Europe, especially in what is now Poland (Porenta 2017: 160), which is evidenced by a word not only found in the [East Slavic](#) and [West Slavic](#) languages but also attested in [South Slavic](#): Sn *bŕt* ‘hollow tree with bees’ (a loanword from Czech; Bezlaj 1997: 49), Ru *bórt* ‘cavity in a forest tree for a swarm of bees’, Ru dial. *bórt* ‘very old large tree’, ORu *bǝrtb* ‘beehive, log hive’, Uk *bórt* ‘hive’, Br *bórc* ‘hive’, Po *barć* ‘stump with a bees’ nest’, OCz *brt* ‘tree hollow colonized by bees; hive entrance’, Sk *brt* ‘cavity in a tree that bees fly in and out of’. The reconstructed PS1 **bǝrtb*, **bǝrtb* with the meaning ‘beehive’ is an [action noun](#) with the original meaning ‘drilling, carving out’, from the unattested verb **bǝrti* ‘to cut, cut out’, which is related to Li *bǝrti* ‘to conjure magic’ (with a secondary meaning ‘to carve [marks on a tree]’). Derived from this verb with the [suffix](#) *-tva* is also Mk *brtva* ‘cavity, hole in a tree or wall for capturing bees’ (Trubačev et al. 1974: 132). [Croatian](#) has the verb *bǝrtiti* ‘to close’, which is also derived from the noun *bǝrtva* ‘hole in a tree’ (Matasović et al. 2016: 89). [Slovene](#) has the verb *bǝrtiti* ‘to close, seal up’ (Pleteršnik 2014), and its semantic motivation is presumably connected with how bees close a hole in a tree by settling in it. These [lexemes](#) are probably derived from the [Proto-Indo-European](#) root **b^herh₂* ‘to cut, work with a sharp tool’ (Pokorny 1959: 166; Vasmer 1950–1958: 110). An interesting though contested explanation is offered by Koleva-Zlateva (2011: 140), who suggests that this involves a metonymic transfer of the meaning ‘magic, lot; magical place’ > ‘hole where wild bees live’, presumably a secondary meaning.

As a component of every such tree cavity, the lexeme for the front board on a hive appeared in the Slavic languages with the following meanings: Sn *dǝlž* ‘front board on a hive’ (Pleteršnik 2014: 154) alongside the meaning ‘length’, BCMS (Herzegovinian) *dǝž*, *dǝžva*, *dǝžalica* ‘board for covering hives’ alongside ‘length’, Ru *dolž*, *dolžejá* ‘lengthwise notch for opening a hive’, Ru dial. *dolž* ‘length’ and ‘hive opening through which the beekeeper removes honey’, Uk dial. *dovž*, *dǝvžka* ‘large side opening in a hive’, Br *dǝžžen* ‘board on the side opening of a hive’, Ps *dovž* (the Polesian lexicon [Tolstoj 1968: 329] explains this as a ‘large hole in the side of a beehive’ used for observing the bees and sometimes also for removing honey), Po *dłuz*, *dłuznia* ‘board on the side opening of a hive’, Cz *dłuz* ‘opening in a hive’, Cz dial. *dłžka* ‘board that covers the rear opening in a hive’, Sk *dłž* ‘hive cover’ (Trubačev et al. 1978: 211–212; Pujić 2013: 592–593). Derived from the Proto-Indo-European root **del(H)-* ‘long, to extend’ (Ślawski 1976: 330, 334) is the noun **dłg^h-i-s*, presumed to mean ‘board cut or carved from wood’, which yielded PS1 **dǝlžb* ‘board cut from wood’.

In investigating apicultural terminology for honeybees, etymological difficulties were caused by designations or words that belong to the most archaic layer of the lexicon. Among these is a word found in the West and East Slavic languages: OPo *świepioto*, Cz *svapato* ‘bees that live in the forest’ (Machek 1928: 150; OPo dial. *świepioto* ‘forest bees; hollow tree in the forest colonized by a swarm of bees’; Kwaśnicka-Janowicz 2015: 50; Machek [1968] connected PS1 **sǝtǝ* ‘honeycomb’ with Cz dial. *svapato* ‘bees that live in the forest’, but his hypothesis about an indirect connection between PS1 **sǝ[p]tǝ* ‘shaken’ and PS1 **svepetǝ* ‘swarm of bees’ is doubtful), ORu *svepetǝ* ‘honey from wild bees’ alongside ‘hanging hive’ (Sreznevsky 1912: 270), OUK *svepetǝ* ‘hive of wild bees’ (Grynčyšyn et al. 1978: 321), OBr *svepetǝ* ‘nest of wild bees’ (Bulyka 2011: 89–90). Variants with an *l* are found in the East Slavic languages: OBr *slepetǝ* ‘nest of wild bees’ (Bulyka 2011: 417), Ps *slǝpotenǝ* ‘hollow tree where wild bees live’ (Tolstoj 1968: 358); Polish also has the form *ślepietnia*, which until the early 20th century designated places colonized by wild bees (Blank-Weissberg 1937:

7–8). It should also be mentioned that this word form underwent dissimilation of the labials $\nu/w > l$, as in the development of ν to l in the widespread Slavic word *svoboda* > *sloboda* ‘freedom’. On the basis of the attested words, it is possible to reconstruct PS1 **svepetz* ‘swarm of bees’ alongside ‘hive of wild bees’. From the examples cited above, it is clear that these words have multiple meanings, but according to Kwaśnicka-Janowicz (2015: 50), it seems that the meaning ‘hive of wild bees, forest tree’ is secondary and that it was metonymically transferred from the original meaning *świepiota* ‘swarm of wild bees’. This explanation seems likely if one takes into account its cognates in [Old Church Slavic](#) (*svepetati* ‘to rock, swing’, *svepiti se* ‘to move’) and Slovene (*svěpati, svepět* ‘shimmering, twinkling [of stars]’). The original semantic motivation must be sought in the manner in which a mass of bees moves or shimmers. The cited forms are from the Proto-Indo-European full-grade root **suep-* with the original meaning ‘to move back and forth, to shake’ (Pokorny 1959: 1049).

The place where bees live is known as a hive, PS1 **pñnʼb* ‘beehive’, which is reconstructed from OCS *pъnъ* ‘stump’, Sn *pānj*, OBCMS *pānj*, Mk *pen*, Bg *pān*, Ru, Uk, Br *pénъ*, Po *pi*□ *eń*, Pb *pan*, Cz, Sk *peň*, US *pjeńk*, LS *peńk* ‘hive’. With the secondary meaning ‘beehive’, which developed from the original meaning ‘stump’, PS1 **pñnʼb* is related to Gr *πίναξ pinax* ‘panel, tablet, board’, Skt *pínāka* ‘staff, stick, club’. These are probably derived from the Proto-Indo-European root **pin-* ‘point, pointed piece of wood’ (Pokorny 1959: 830). In the Slavic languages, derivations from the root **ul-* are generally used to designate manmade beehives: OCS *ulii*, Sn *ûlj* ‘hollow tree, beehive’, BCMS *ûl, ûlište* ‘beehive, skep’, Mk *ulenik, ulište* ‘beehive’ and ‘swarm of bees’, Bg *ulej, ulište* ‘hollow tree, trough’, Ru *ulej* ‘hive’, Uk *vúlij*, Br *vúlej* ‘hive’, Po *ul* ‘hive’, colloquially also ‘hole’, Pb *vaül* ‘hive’, Cz *úl*, OCz *úli*, Sk *úl*, US *hul* ‘carved-out tree’, LS *wul* ‘hollowed-out tree colonized by bees’, based on which PS1 **ûltz* is reconstructed alongside **ûltjz* with the original meaning ‘(oblong) cavity, hole (in a tree)’, which is related to Li *aulys* ‘beehive’ and Lt *aūlis* ‘idem’, and, with metathesis, La *abvus* ‘abdominal cavity’ alongside ‘hive’ (Smoczyński 2016: 67). PS1 **ûltjz* comes from PIE **(h₂)āulijo-* ‘hollowed-out tree’, which is derived from **(h₂)āulo-* ‘tube, oblong cavity’ (Pokorny 1959: 88; Vasmer 1950–1958, vol. IV: 158).

The hanging structure of wax plates with the bee brood, used at the same time to store honey and pollen, is designated in the Slavic languages by derivations of PS1 **sžtž* ‘honeycomb’: OCS *sžtž*, ChS collective *sžtije, sžtovije* ‘comb of honey’, Sn *sāt, sātje, sātovje*, BCMS *sāt, sâce*, Mk *sot*, Bg *sāt*, Ru *sót*, Uk, Br *sóty* ‘honeycomb’. Several explanations have been offered for PS1 **sžtž*, but the explanation by Mikkola (1913–1950, vol. III: 25) seems the most likely: **sup-to-* > PS1 **sž(p)tž-* is a passive participle from **suti, *sžpž* ‘to shake’, which is related to Li *sùpti, supù* ‘to swing, circle’. In this case, PS1 **sž(p)tž, *sž(p)tž* are a participle and abstract noun with the original meaning ‘something that shakes, shimmers’ (Marko Snoj, in Bezlaj 1995: 219).

Designations for members of bee colonies

A central part of the technical terminology is the name for the honeybee *Apis mellifera*, which has been raised since time immemorial throughout the world. The words used in the Slavic languages are OCS *bčela*, Sn *čebēla*, BCMS *pčela*, Mk *pčela*, Bg *pčelá*, Ru *pčelá*, Uk *bdžolá*, Br *pčelá*, Po *pszczola*, Cz, Sk *včela*, US *pčola*, LS *cola*. Although it is word is clearly of [Proto-Slavic](#) origin, questions remain regarding its exact form, of which two variants can be

reconstructed: **b̥čelǵ* and **b̥čelǵ̃*. Following the first reconstruction, the word is related to the verb **būčati* ‘to buzz, hum’, and its original meaning is therefore ‘buzzing, humming insect’ (Ślawski 1974: 456). The reconstructed word is derived from the [Proto-Indo-European onomatopoeic](#) root **bʰuk-*, which designated a dull natural sound (Pokorny 2007: 300). Following the second reconstruction, the word is formed from the Proto-Indo-European root **bʰej-* ‘bee’, present in the designation for bees in other Indo-European languages: Li *bitis*, *bītē* ‘bee’, expanded with the suffix **-ko-* in OIri *bech* ‘bee’ (< **bhi-ko-*) and La *fūcus* ‘drone’ (< **bhokʷos*), OHG *bini*, Ge *Biene*, OEn *beo*, En *bee* ‘bee’ (Trubačev et al. 1976: 104; Havlová 1975: 90; Snoj 2016: 93). In addition to these variations, the following forms with the meaning ‘bee’ also appear in the Slavic languages: Sn *čmēla*, KJ *čmēla*, Ru *mcelá*, *mčelá*, Uk dial. *čmolá*, and Po dial. *čmiela*. The feminine nominal form of the [lexeme](#) PSI **č̥melʰ* is presumed to be the result of a merger with a semantically similar designation for the honeybee (Pujčić 2013: 478).

Bumblebees are similar to honeybees, and they are designated in the Slavic languages as follows: Ru *šmél*, Uk *čmíl*, *džmíl*, Br *čmél*, Po *trzmieł*, *czmieł*, Pb *staměl*, Cz *čmel*, OCz *ščmieł*, Sk *čmel*, US *čmjela*, LS *tšmíel* ‘bumblebee’. Related to this is also Sn *čmřlj* ‘bumblebee’, which arose through dialect development from PSI **čmēl*, gen **čmālʰ* > **čmǵlā* > **čmřlʰ* (Ramovš 1924: 83). This shows that this lexeme is present in both [East](#) and [West Slavic](#) as well as [Slovene](#). Following the principles of comparative Slavic linguistics, it is possible to reconstruct PSI **č̥melʰ* ‘buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*)’, which is further related to OHG *hum̃bal*, Ge *Hummel* ‘bumblebee’, PSI **komarʰ* ‘mosquito’, Li *kamānē* ‘a kind of bumblebee’, *kaminē* ‘wild bee’, Lt *kamīne*, OP *camus* ‘bumblebee’, Skt *camarās* ‘domestic yak (*Bos gruniens*)’, all from the Proto-Indo-European root **kem-* ‘to buzz, hum’, from which MHG, Ge *hummen* ‘to hum’ and Li *kimsti* ‘to become hoarse’ are also derived (Ślawski 1976: 311; Pokorny 1959: 556; Vasmer 1950–1958: 459).

Another important member of the bee colony is the drone, which has the role of fertilizing the queen. The Latin designation for the drone is *fucus*, and based on Slavic comparative material – Sn *trōt*, BCMS *trūt*, Mk *trut*, Bg *trút*, Ru *trútenʹ*, Uk *trút*, Br *trúcenʹ*, OPo *trqđ*, Po *truteń*, Pm *trqđ*, OCz *trút*, Cz dial. *trout*, Sk *trúd*, US *truta*, LS *tšút* ‘drone’ – one can reconstruct PSI **trōtʰ*, which is further related to Li *trānas* ‘drone’, metaphorically ‘exploiter’, and Lt *trans* ‘drone’ (Vasmer 1950–1958: 111), derived from the Proto-Indo-European stem **tren-*, which differs only in its onset from the onomatopoeic stem **dʰren-* ‘to buzz, hum, emit a dull sound’. This is indicated by parallels in Laconian Gr *θρῶνᾱξ* *thronax* and *τενθρήνη* *tenthrenē* ‘wasp’, *ἀνθρήνη* *anthrenē* ‘wild bee, wasp’, OEn *drān* ‘drone’, MHG *tren* ‘drone’, OHG *tren*, Ge *Drohne* ‘idem’ (Kluge 1999: 195; Pokorny 1959: 255).

PSI **bō̥ba*, **bū̥ba* are reconstructed from Sn *búba* ‘insect, cocoon, larva’, BCMS *būba* ‘insect, silkworm’, Mk *buba* ‘insect, silkworm cocoon’, Bg *búba* ‘silkworm cocoon’, Ru dial. *búba* ‘strawberry, pea’, Uk *búba* ‘idem’, Br *búba* ‘grain’, Po dial. *buba* ‘strawberry’, Ka dial. *buba* ‘louse, flea’ (Ślawski 1974: 346). The reconstructed word therefore has two variants: PSI **bō̥ba* and **bū̥ba* ‘something small, round’, which is further related to Li *bám̃ba* ‘navel’, Lt *bañba* ‘ball’, Gr *βόμβυξ* *bombyx*, La *bombyx*, *bambax* ‘silkworm cocoon’, Skt *bimba-* ‘circle, ball’, Se dial. *bamb* ‘belly’. (On the basis of attested words, it can be argued that the Slavic languages have the variant **bū̥ba*, and the other Indo-European languages the form with nasality. However, this explanation is contradicted by Po dial. *bomba* ‘large blister on the skin’.) With a voiceless *p*, it is related to PSI **p̥p̥k̥* with the meaning ‘something swollen,

bud'. All these forms derive from the Proto-Indo-European [onomatopoeic](#) stem **bamb-* alongside **pamp-* 'swell, something swollen' (Pokorny 1959: 94). The Slavic languages also have a lexeme denoting 'bee larva', PSL **čьrvъ* 'worm', reconstructed based on OCS *črvъ*, Sn *črv*, BCMS *črv* alongside *cřva* (F), Mk *crv*, Bg *čărv*, Ru *červ* alongside *červá* (F) 'bee larva', Uk *červák*, dial. *čyrvá*, *červá* (F) 'bee larva', Br *čarvják* alongside *čarvá* (F), Po *czerw*, Pb *ceř(ý)*, Cz *červ*, Sk *červ*, *červač*, dial. *červ* 'bee larva', US *čerw*, LS *cerw* 'worm' (Trubačev et al. 1977: 166, 171). PSL **čьrvъ*, which is related to Al *kri* 'woodworm' (Orel 1998: 196), is a doublet with **čьrmъ*, which is further related to Li *kirmis* 'worm, insect; tapeworm; snake; bee larva', Lt *cirmis* 'worm, insect', OP *girmis* 'worm', Skt *kṛmi-*, OIri *cruim* 'worm', OPe *kirm* 'insect; snake', all from PIE **k_ṛṛ-_ui-/***k_ṛṛ-mi-* 'worm' (Pokorny 1959: 649; Smoczyński 2016: 520).

The word for 'swarm' designates a group of bees that have left the hive with a queen. PSL **rǫjъ* 'swarm of bees' is reconstructed from OCS *roi* 'multitude, crowd' and 'swarm', Sn *rǫj*, BCMS *rǫj*, Mk *roj*, Bg *rój*, Ru *rój*, Uk *rúj*, Br *rój*, Po *rój*, Cz, Sk *roj*, US *rój*, LS *roj*. PSL **rǫjъ* 'swarm' probably developed from PIE **róiHo-* 'course, flow', still preserved in Skt *rayas* 'flow, ardor, rush, violence', which is an action noun from the base **erejH-* 'to flow'. Also related is La *rīvus* (< **reǵiH-uo-*) 'stream', PSL **rěká* (< **roiH-kā*) (Marko Snoj, in Bezlaž 1995: 193; Vasmer 1989: 532).

Designations for bee products

Honey, the basic beekeeping product used as a valuable foodstuff, was certainly known to all the Slavs from the very earliest times. The forms of the word for 'honey' are as follows: OCS *medъ*, Sn (archaic/dialectal) *mêd* 'beverage', BCMS *mêd*, Mk, Bg *med*, Ru *mêd*, Uk *med*, Br *mêd*, Po *miód*, Pb *med*, Cz, Sk *med*, US *mêd*, LS *mjod* (Havlová 1989, vol. VIII: 461).

Reconstructed PSL **mêdъ*, gen **mêdu*, is related to Li *medūs* 'honey', Lt *mêdus*, OP *meddo* 'honey', Skt *mádhu-* 'honey, mead', Gr *μέθυ* *methy* 'wine', OIri *mid* 'mead', ONo *mjoðr*, OEn *meodu* or *meodu*, OHG *metu*, Ge *Met* 'mead'. This shows that it was an old *u*-stem derived from the [Proto-Indo-European](#) root **med^hu-* 'honey, intoxicating drink made from honey' (Pokorny 1959: 707), which, as the neuter nominalized adjective **med^hu-* 'sweet', is preserved in Skt *mádhu-* 'sweet' (Snoj 2016: 413). As a special natural product, honey can crystalize when its glucose changes from liquid to solid, and so the Slavic languages have a synonym for 'honey' reflecting this. In eastern Herzegovina, the old beekeepers' process of crystalizing honey was designated by the verb *us(t)rijéšit se*, and this process resulted in *us(t)rijěšen mēd* 'crystalized honey' (Pujić 2013: 555). Examining the situation in the other Slavic languages, the following forms are found: OCS *strědbъ* 'honey', Sn *střd* 'honey', ORu *strědbъ*, *stredbъ* 'honey', Po *stredź*, Po dial. *strzedź* 'honey', OCz, Cz dial. *stred*, *strd* (in Czech, the word is used in the sense of 'thick honey'; Pujić 2013: 555), collective *strdí* 'pure honey without the comb', Sk *stred* 'honey'. In older Slovene, the word *střd* can also have the meaning 'honeycomb' (Pohlin 1781). PSL **strědbъ* alongside **strědbъ* 'honeycomb, honey' is related to PGe **hruti-* in MDu *rôte*, *röte* 'honeycomb(s)', all from PIE **k^rrdí-*, and variants with a lengthened root vowel are known in PGe **hrētō* > OHG *rāza*, *rāz*, Ge *Roße*, *Roß*, Du *raat* 'honeycomb, honey in a comb' from PIE **k^rredah₂* and in ORu *strada* 'honey' from PIE **k^rōdah₂* (Snoj 1990: 725).

The drink that the ancient Slavs made from honey was designated by PSL **sŷta*. This word is attested in Sr *síta*, Ru *sytá*, Uk *sítá*, Br *sytá*, and Po *syta*, all with the meaning 'honey syrup; honey dissolved in water' (Lazarenko 2011: 52). In Dal's explanatory dictionary (1881: 684),

this word appears with the following meanings: ‘honey drink’, ‘water sweetened with honey’, and ‘honey boiled in water’. In constructing the etymology for this word, it is necessary to proceed from the original semantic motivations found in the filling effect that the drink has because of the high sugar content and other nutrients in honey. According to Lazarenko (2011: 53), the semantic development was as follows: ‘full, satiated’ > ‘become full’, ‘filling water’ > ‘honey drink’, which shows the nominalization process of the [Proto-Slavic](#) adjective **sŷtŷ* ‘full, satiated’. In Proto-Indo-European, the word is the passive participle **suH-tó-* ‘filled’, from the Indo-European stem **seu(H)-* ‘to be full’, which is confirmed by Hi *šunna-* ‘fill’, adj *šu-* ‘full’ and Skt *sūtu-* (f) ‘pregnancy’ (Metka Furlan, in Bezlaž 1995: 238–239).

The next word examined here refers to the wax that bees use to build the cells in their honeycomb: OCS *voskŷ*, Sn *vôsek*, BCMS *vôsak*, Mk *vosok*, Bg *vôsák*, Ru *vósk*, Uk *vísk*, Br *vósk*, Po *wosk*, Pb *vâsk*, Cz, Sk *vosk*, US, LS *wósk*. On the basis of these forms, it is possible to reconstruct PSI **vôskŷ* ‘wax’, which is further related to Li *vâškas* ‘wax’, Lt *vask* ‘idem’, PGe **wáhsa-*, OHG, MHG, OSax *wahs*, ON *vax*, OEn *weax*, En *wax* ‘wax’ (Pokorny 1959: 1180; Kluge 1957: 830), from PIE **uokso-* ‘wax’, derived from the root **ueg-* ‘weave’ like OHG *waba*, Ge *Wabe* ‘honeycomb’ derived from the Proto-Indo-European root **ueb^h-* ‘weave’ (Miklosich 1886: 395; Vasmer 1950–1958: 357). In the Slavic languages, **vôskŷ* with the suffix **-ina* gave rise to the Proto-Slavic form **voskina*, which in turn yielded Sn *voščína* ‘honeycomb, wax dividers from which pure honey is extracted’, BCMS *vôština*, *vôščína* ‘used honeycomb’, Mk *voština* ‘honeycomb’, Ru *voščína* ‘wax cell in a hive’, Ps *voščýna*, Po *woszczyń* (PL) ‘honeycomb’.

Pollen is also a bee product; bees gather pollen from the stamens of flowering plants. There are various designations for pollen, a central one being PSI **pêludŷ* ‘pollen’. In the modern Slavic languages, parallels are found only in BCMS *pêlūd* ‘pollen’, a word that has been characterized as an artificial hybrid created from Cz *pel* ‘pollen’ and the BCMS suffix *-ūd*. However, on the basis of Slovene dialect formations *spelude* ‘scabies’ and *špelūd* ‘flake, chip’, which are themselves based on the lexicalized prepositional phrase PSI **sô peludŷ* ‘something resembling flakes, dust, chaff’, Snoj (1989: 154) believes that the explanation as an artificial hybrid form is less likely, and that PSI dial. **pêludŷ* ‘dust’ most likely comes from the Proto-Indo-European diphthongal stem **pelHou-* ‘dust, flour’ (present in PSI **pêlva* ‘chaff, husks’) and the Proto-Slavic collective suffix **-db*.

Geographical names

The majority of geographical names (see [Toponymy](#)) analyzed in this article are originally [suffixed](#) formations that arose via derivation with a suffix as part of an act of naming. This involves a word-formation affix that serves to turn a common noun into a proper noun.

Siepietnica

This village lies at the outflow of the rivers Olszynka and Ropa in southeastern Poland. Its oldest written attestations – *Zuepethnici uilla* and *Suepetnici villa* – are preserved in two versions of a document from 1275, which is itself probably a copy of a document from 1123–1125 (Rymut 2003: 209). This date is thus a *terminus ante quem*, which means that the name was first written down in 1123–1125, but that it certainly existed before this. In the

early 14th century, the name was simplified to *Svepetnica* (1320), and thereafter to *Siepietnica* in the 16th century (Rymut 2003: 210), whereby its grammatical [number](#) and [gender](#) also changed. Taking into account the chronology and the analyzed forms of the toponym, it can be presumed that this name is based on the unattested noun **šwiepietnik*, which probably meant 'beekeeper engaged in forest beekeeping'. Considering that the first two attested forms of the name are in the plural, there is a strong likelihood that this refers to the name of a profession practiced by the inhabitants of the settlement: PSI **svepetnikъ* > PSI **svepetnici*. On the basis of sources from 1319 and 1320, in which the name is cited as *Swepetnicza* and *Svepetnica* (Kętrzyński and Smolka 1875: 79, 81), as well as from 1348, when *Siepietnica* is mentioned as a [hydronym](#) (Kętrzyński and Smolka 1875: 240), it is possible to explain the change in grammatical [gender](#) and [number](#). According to Solarza (2016: 66), there are two possibilities: the first is that the proper noun originally applied to the river that flows through the settlement, and only later to the village, while the second possibility is that the name applied to the entire valley where beekeepers were active in the Carpathian forests.

The [toponym](#) *Sepicy* (Ge *Schwepnitz*) refers to a village in Upper Lusatia. It is first attested in 1387, when it was mentioned as the seat of a lord named Nicolaus: *Nicolaus de Swepetenycz*. In 1432, the name was transcribed as *Sweptenitcz*, in 1479 as *zu der Sweppenicz*, and in 1562 and again in 1791 as *Schwepnitz* (Eichler and Walther 2001: 396). The toponym is based on the Proto-Slavic noun **svepetnikъ* 'beekeeper engaged in woodland beekeeping', unattested in [Sorbian](#). Taking the attested forms into account, it can be concluded that the name comes from the plural noun **svepetnici*, which underwent simplification of vowel sequences and syncope to yield Sorbian *Sepicy*, which presumably refers to a place where people were engaged in woodland beekeeping.

The microtoponym *Ljànĭk*, which is found in the municipality of Preševo in southern Serbia, is derived from PSI **ŭljbъ* 'beehive' with the suffixes **-ъn-* and **-ikъ*: **ŭljbъ-n-ikъ* > *uljànĭk* > *ljànĭk* > *Ljànĭk*, which underwent apheresis because the initial *u-* was unaccented. The name is derived from a common noun and presumably refers to a place where beehives were once found.

On the basis of studies to date, the Proto-Slavic base **bъrtъ* 'beehive' has parallels in most Slavic languages and is also very widespread in Slavic toponymy, especially in the [West Slavic](#) language area. Because toponyms are closely connected with natural features, the territorial range of [Moravian–Silesian](#) toponyms based on *brt-/brt-* is also interesting: these appear in the Blansko, Jihlava, Třebíč, and Zlín regions – more specifically, in areas of predominantly mixed forests, on which woodland beekeeping depended (Hlubinková 2009: 85). *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich* (1961: 89) states that villages that originally had the character of temporary settlements were found near forests with beehives. Later, these often developed into permanent settlements, as indicated by the large number of names based on this root:

Br̥tce (colloquially *Br̥tec*, loc *Br̥tci*, gen *Br̥tce*, *Br̥ták*; Bohemia), with old attestations *Brdcze* (1379), *Brtcze* (1423), *Br̥tezie* (1549), *Brtze* (1842), *Br̥tče* (1854), and *Br̥tce* (1904; Profous 1947, vol. I: 209), is a denominative name derived from the Proto-Slavic common noun **bъrtъ* with the derivational suffix **-ъce*, which has a diminutive meaning: **bъrtъ* > **bъrtъce* > *br̥tce* > *Br̥tce*. The toponym *Br̥tce* therefore presumably designates a place where there were once

small hives. By analogy with the form of the toponym *Vesec* from OCz *vescé*, the form *Brtec* was derived from *brtce* (Profous 1947, vol. I: 209).

Brtníky (Bohemia) is derived from the Proto-Slavic common noun **bǫrtъ* 'hive' with the suffixes **-ьn-* and **-ikъ*, which yielded PSl **bǫrtьniky*, a plural accusative noun. This involves a generalization of an oblique case form when a toponym arises based on an accusative of direction that starts to be used as a base form. Such toponyms are usually deadjectival nouns, in this case from the adjective **bǫrtьnъ* '(of, related to a) hive', just as PSl **blōdъnikъ* 'sinner' comes from the adjective **blōdъnъ* 'sinful', which has the meaning of the agent of an action. All this shows that the toponym *Brtníky* is derived from a common noun and that its original semantic motivation was presumably that of a reference to a place where people once engaged in forest beekeeping (Cz *brtnictví*).

Brník (Slovenia), dial. *Bārānk*, with the oldest attestations *Perneckē* (1238) and *Pernekke* (1260), showing that this toponym was originally a plural form of the Proto-Slavic common noun **bǫrtnikъ* 'beekeeper', first appeared in the singular as *villa Fornik* (1313) and later in the forms *Ober Perenek* and *Nider Perenek* (1351). According to Snoj (2009: 83), there are two possibilities for the origin of this toponym. The first is that it may have arisen from the profession of the population, **Bǫrtniky* 'beekeepers', which is the nominative plural of the Proto-Slavic common noun **bǫrtnikъ* 'beekeeper', in which the consonant cluster *-rt-* was simplified to *-r-*, and the spelling *-er-* in place of *-r-* may be a remnant from before the orthographic reform of the first half of the 19th century. The second possibility is that it is a derivation from PSl **bǫrdъnikъ* 'inhabitant of a hill', formed from PSl **bǫrdo* 'hill'.

Barce, Ge *Barzig* (Lower Lusatia) is first attested as *Barczk* (1403), then as *Bartzk* (1434), *Bartzka* (1572), and *Bartz* (1685); in 1843, it appears as *Barce*, and in 1847 as *Barze* (Wenzel 2010: 101). Schuster-Šewc (1994: 219) addressed the etymology of this name, and according to him, it is derived from the Proto-Slavic common noun **bǫrdo* 'hill'. This explanation is contradicted by an etymology offered by Wenzel (2010: 101), who points out that there are no elevations in the vicinity of this settlement that would justify such a name. According to him, the toponym contains the Proto-Slavic common noun **bǫrtъ* 'hive' (not attested in Sorbian), and he therefore suggests the following reconstruction: **Barćk* < **Bǫrtъkъ* 'small settlement near a bee house'. The toponym *Barce* is a *plurale tantum* (Starosta 1999: 68), and it therefore seems that the genitive plural form, which had a high frequency of linguistic use, was reanalyzed as the base form.

Mêdno is a settlement in the municipality of Ljubljana (Slovenia). It is attested in 1327 as *Medown* (1327) and then as *Medow* (1337), *Medawen* (1340), and *Medenn* (1490). According to Snoj (2009: 257), on the basis of the medieval attestations, the name was originally *Medovъnō* (*selō*) 'honey (village)', which presumably contains the adjective *medānski*, a derivative of **med(ov)ъnъskъjъ*. If so, the settlement is presumably named after beekeeping, after the production of honey, or after the collection of tributes in the form of honey. Another possible etymology of the name that Bezljaj was inclined to accept is the [hypocorism](#) **Medo* or a similar nickname, which is preserved in the surname *Medved* (Bezljaj 1961: 15).

Conclusion

A rich apicultural vocabulary indicates that beekeeping was widespread among the Slavic peoples as a branch of agriculture. On the basis of terms extant in the Slavic languages, we are justified in concluding that there were two kinds of beekeeping. Woodland beekeeping was practiced primarily by the East and West Slavs, as evidenced by the frequency of terms for woodland beekeeping descended from PSI **bǫrtъ* and **svepet* in East and West Slavic. Domestic beekeeping was certainly known to all Slavs. This is confirmed by the attestations of words descended from PSI **pčnъ* and PSI **ŭlъjъ* in most of the Slavic languages. The Slavs made use not only of honey but also of other apicultural products, and some produced drinks from honey, as evidenced by words descended from PSI **sŭta*. Traces of apiculture are also recognizable in numerous Slavic place names. An examination shows that most toponyms based on PSI **bǫrtъ* occur in the Czech Republic, Poland, and in East Slavic lands, territories that also attest toponyms based on PSI **bъčelā* (which have not been treated here). On the basis of the reconstructed words, we can conclude that Slavic languages changed Indo-European apicultural terminology more in form than in meaning. Thus, the diachronic and synchronic evidence shows that Slavic languages largely inherited the Indo-European vocabulary.

Nonstandard abbreviations used in this article:

Kj	Kajkavian
ON	Old Nordic
Pm	Pomeranian
Ps	Polesian
Sax	Saxon
Se	Swedish

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