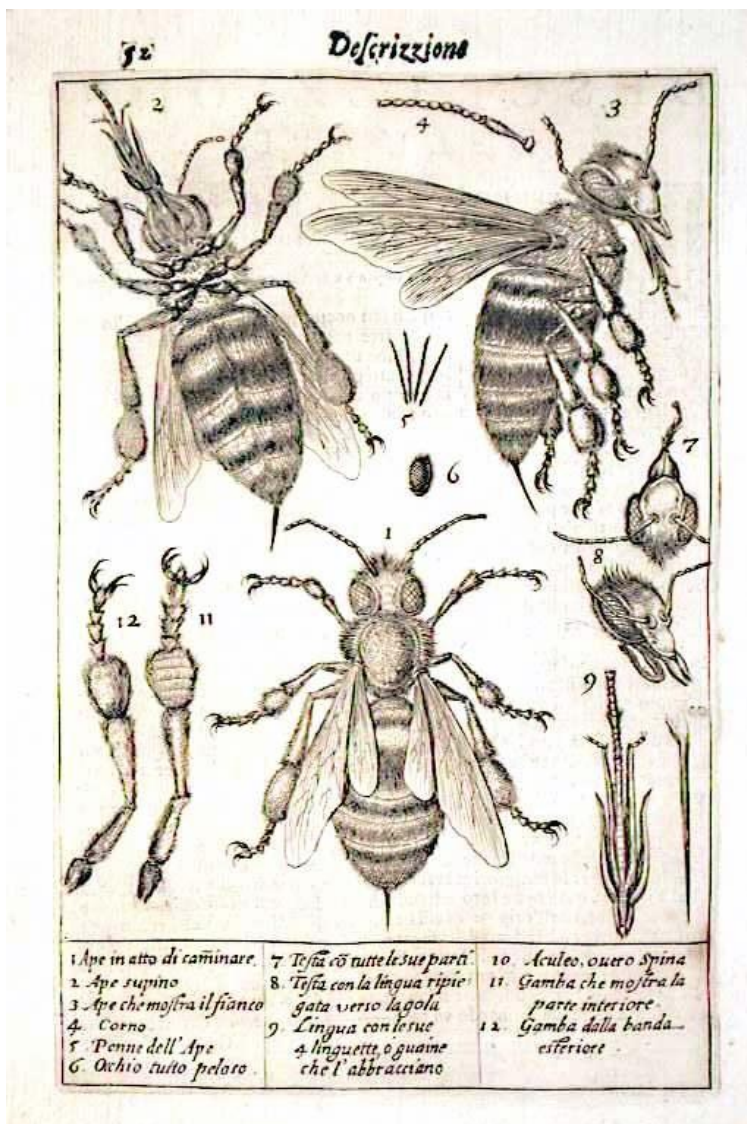


Honey Bee *Apis mellifera* – A little history.



The Honey Bee, *Apis mellifera* has a misleading scientific name, the Greek *mellifera* meaning "bearer of honey". It was coined in 1758 by Linnaeus, who originally assumed that bees collected honey from flowers and carried it to their nests. But it is nectar that bees carry, converting it to honey later. Three years later, in 1761, Linnaeus recognized his mistake and tried to correct it in subsequent publications by renaming the species *Apis mellifica*, the "honey maker", but according to the rules on nomenclature the first name assigned takes precedence over the later, and so we continue to use the name *Apis mellifera*.



The *Apiarium* was the first publication of observations with Galileo's microscope. Printed in 1625, it was an anatomical study of the Honey Bee made by Federico Cesi (1585-1630) and Francesco Stelluti (1577-1653). Stelluti's drawings and meticulous description of the parts of the bee were published in 1630 as an appendix to his translation of the Latin poet Persius.

Sex determination in bees was first discovered in 1845 by Johann Dzierzon, the Polish apiarist who devised the first practical movable-comb beehive. Dzierzon reported that a virgin queen produces only male progeny.

His report, half a century before the discovery of sex chromosomes, was the first rigorous description of the bees' sex determination system. Dzierzon was a Catholic priest and his discoveries concerning asexual reproduction led him to question papal infallibility and, eventually, to his excommunication.

Pictures above <http://bit.ly/Stelluti> and top <http://bit.ly/Apiarium>