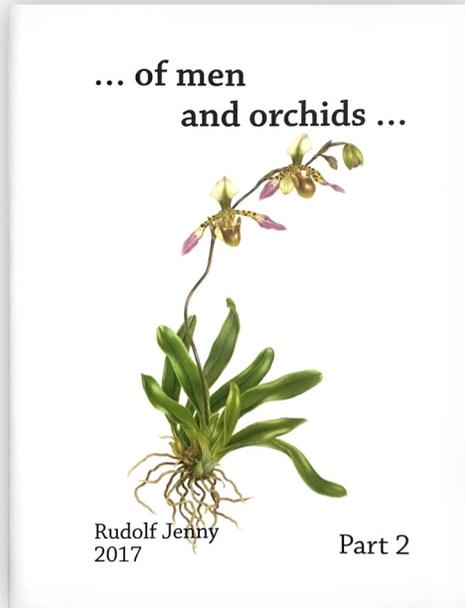


## BOOK REVIEWS

### **...of men and orchids... Part 2**

Rudolf Jenny. Quito, Imprenta Mariscal, privately printed by the author, 2017. ISBN 9942-28-312, *in octavo* volume (27 × 22 cm), 312 pages, with 394 photographs, historical illustrations, and portraits. Hardbound with dust jacket. In English. \$110.00. Available with the author at [www.orchilibra.com](http://www.orchilibra.com).



A couple of years ago, in reviewing the first release of this interesting series by an already acclaimed author, I noted that the human history of orchids is quite a neglected topic when compared to the amount of information available on the natural history of this fascinating group of plants (Pupulin 2015). No doubts, Rudolf Jenny is seriously committed in the effort to reduce this gap. This year he presented the second part of his multi-volume study "*...of men and orchids...*", a work that – once completed – promises to be an encyclopedic essay on the preeminent but often forgotten figures, both on the scientific and the horticultural sides, whose diverse contributions made the history of orchidology and the orchid world as we know it today.

Following the style of the first part of his work (Jenny 2015), the author presents a series of essays that are neither thought as a book on the history of

horticulture nor on the history of orchid science. Instead, Jenny takes the excuse of the names of orchids to offer independent journeys within the lives, adventures, bravery, dreams and misfortunes of real men – explorers, plant hunters, gardeners, botanists –, who made it possible to discover and name the amazing diversity of the Orchidaceae.

The volume collects 36 chapters (plus an essential index of scientific and personal names), presenting a glimpse into the history of men and orchids from the Seventeenth century almost to our days, always accompanied and enriched by an exceptional iconographic apparatus. You will find stories of famous scientists of the past, like Olof Swartz, Carl Ludwig Blume, or Johan Jacob Smith, and more recent botanists like Sokichi Segawa, Arthur Francis George Kerr and François Pittier; renown orchidologists like Heinrich Gustav Reichenbach and the De Candolle

dynasty, and less known ones as Alexander Moritzi and Albert Spear Hitchcock; gardeners like Robert Pantling or William Brass; plant hunters like John Henry Chesterton and Clarence Horich (the latter portrayed with an extraordinary photograph); collectors like Cristoph Ludwig Albrecht Keferstein (this is the first orchid book where Mr. Keferstein is identified with his personal names) and the Reichenheim family; orchid painters like Florence Helen Woodward, and also simply gentlemen like Count Luigi Maria d'Albertis, an Italian explorer who collected in New Guinea and Australia and gave speeches at the Royal Geographical Society, and who I met for the first time in Jenny's pages.

Do all these names resound like somehow familiar? The simple reason is that there are orchids that honor and immortalize these names, orchids that we study and cultivate. Each of the chapters that compose the volume, in fact, tells the story of an orchid (or a few orchids) and a man (or a few men), providing not only complete biographical sketches of the protagonists, but often also discussing in depth the taxonomy of the concerned species. In a number of cases, the names of these persons, who are behind the discovery and scientific apprehension of orchids, receive for the first time ever, In Jenny's book, a face.

Orchids are an excuse to bring to life, in historical images and modern photos, the efforts and courage, the ambitions and the extraordinary will, of the men who wrote the history of orchids, contributing to their knowledge and appreciation. And, to be just an excuse, I have to say that orchids are lavishly illustrated with hundreds of images, including ancient drawings, paintings, type specimens and engravings, watercolors and simple sketches, illustrations of the past in black and white and in color, and contemporary photographs often taken by the author himself. They are, without exceptions, perfectly reproduced.

Reviewing the first volume, I could only criticize the lack of a frontispiece; in this superb volume 2, the problem was fixed and I am left without any arguments to exercise my criticism. "...of men and orchids..." is both entertaining and instructive, thanks to the proven experience of the author as a researcher in both orchid taxonomy and botanical history. This work well deserves a place in any serious library.

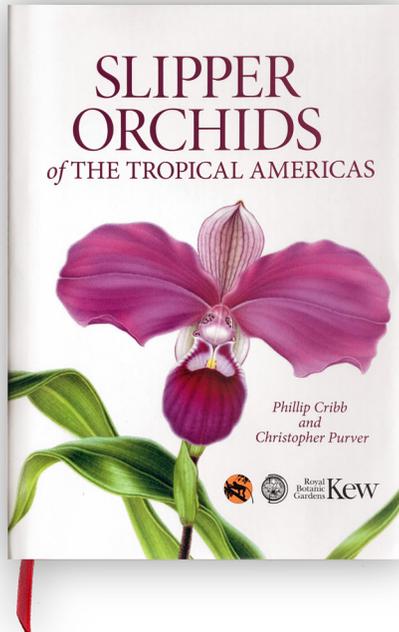
*Franco Pupulin*

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### Slipper Orchids of the Tropical Americas

Phillip Cribb and Christopher Purver. Natural History Publications and The Orchid Digest in association with Royal Botanic Gardens. 2017. ISBN 978-983-812-175-0. *In octavo* volume, 281 pp., 209 colored illustrations, hardcover with dust jacket. \$120.00-170.00.



Slipper orchids are among the most appreciated orchid species, and since the beginning of modern orchidology they strongly attracted the attention of both horticulturists and botanists. However, on spite of the relatively recent discovery of the monospecific genus *Mexipedium* and the description of seven valid species of tropical American Cyripedioideae during the last 15 years (according to this book), the literature of the slipper orchids has been predominately focused in the Asian genus *Paphiopedilum* and the species of *Cyripedium* from temperate regions.

This extraordinary book fills a longly due scientific tribute to all the species of slipper orchids from the Neotropics, including complete monographs of *Selenipedium*, *Phragmipedium* and *Mexipedium* [Central American species of *Cyripedium* sect. *Irapeana* were already covered by Cribb's (1997) excellent monograph on the genus *Cyripedium*]. After a historical introduction, it covers the morphology, anatomy, cytology, pollination, ecology, conservation, phylogeny, classification, and hybridization about the three genera. The species concept used by the authors to

shape the taxonomy of the group is declared in a specific chapter. The introductory sections are followed by the description of all the known species in the group, beginning with *Selenipedium* [which enlarges and complements with a lot of photographs the author's previous treatment of the genus (Cribb 2009)], with 9 accepted species. The generic treatments are preceded by useful and technically clear dichotomic keys to the species, and to the sections when required. The monotypic *Mexipedium* follows, with interesting images of *in-situ* plants photographed in their xerophytic forest habitat. Then the largest section of the book is devoted to the monograph of *Phragmipedium*, organized in the four sections proposed by Garay (1979), whilst sect. *Schluckebieiria* Braem (with the sole *P. kovachii*) is sunk within sect. *Micropetalum* (Hallier) Garay. The treatment recognizes 21 species and 3 varieties of *Phragmipedium*. Most notably, *P. dalessandroi* is recognized as a valid species, distinct from *P. besseae*; *P. manzurrii* is reduced into synonymy as a variety of *P. schlimii*; and *P. hincksianum*, *P. hartwegii*, *P. roezlii*, and *P. chapadense* are treated as

synonyms of a broadly circumscribed *P. longifolium*. A complete Bibliography, an essential Appendix on the specimens examined for the study, as well as general and scientific indexes complete the work.

The book is beautifully illustrated with paintings (including modern, exquisite watercolours together with the earliest illustrations known of each taxon), detailed line drawings, and distribution maps for all the species included, as well as excellent photographs of plants *in situ* and close-ups of their flowers.

The authors, Phil Cribb and Chris Purver, do not need presentation for their own, proven expertise in the group. Currently an Honorary Research Fellow of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, Cribb is the worldwide recognized leading taxonomist in the Cypridioideae (with published monographs on all the genera of the subtribe). Purver has been Curator of the Eric Young Orchid Foundation (EYOF) and its distinguished *Phragmipedium* breeding program during the last 15 years. He is the responsible of the detailed chapters on *Phragmipedium* artificial hybridization (which brings light to the renewed efforts by the EYOF after the discovery of the scarlet-flowered *P. besseae* and the new breeding trends towards showy and long-lasting flowers) and cultivation, which conclude the book.

This work must be considered the definitive treatment to date of *Phragmipedium*, *Mexipedium* and *Selenipedium*. It not only discusses in detail the systematics of each species, presenting articulate evidence for the taxonomic decisions that guided the authors, but also puts to an end historical questions about the identity and correct use of some of the most controversial names in the group. *Phragmipedium humboldtii* (Warsz.) J.T. Atwood & Dressler is established as the correct name to be used for the Central American long-petaled species, resolving a topic extensively debated in the last decade (Braem & Ohlund 2004, Pupulin & Dressler 2011, Braem 2014, Pupulin 2016, among others). *Phragmipedium warszewiczianum* (Rchb.f.) Schltr. is finally adopted for the north-Andean species previously known as *P. wallisii*, so rejecting Dressler's (2005) hypothesis

about the conspecificity of this taxon as a peloric form of *P. lindenii*.

One of the tasks of the reviewer of a new book is finding some points to criticize, a way to show the human nature of the authors. With Cribb and Purver's monograph on the slipper orchids from tropical America, this demonstration resulted impossible, and I was unable to discover any minor fault to the book.

Authoritative, clear, well argued, lavishly illustrated and perfectly printed, this book will certainly become a collector's item. Every person, even if only slightly interested in the slipper orchids, should have its own copy.

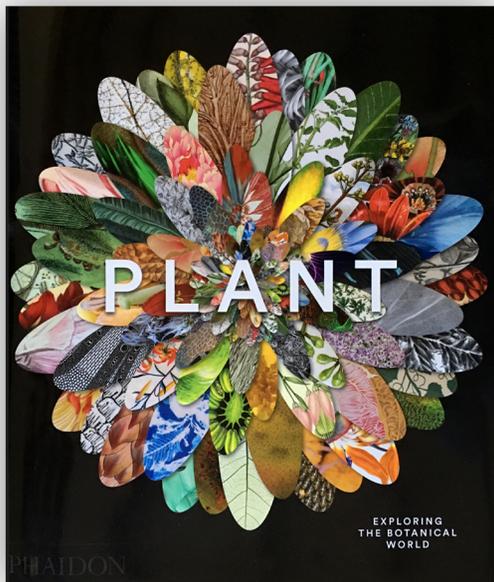
Melissa Díaz-Morales

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### Plant. Exploring the Botanical World

James Compton (ed.). London, Phaidon Press, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0714871486. Large *in octavo* volume (30 × 26 cm), 352 pages, with over 300 illustrations. Hardbound with dust jacket. In English. \$30.00–50.00.



*Plant: Exploring the Botanical World* is not a book on orchids, and as such, it should probably not be reviewed here. Out of 300 extraordinary botanical illustrations perfectly reproduced in the book, only just a few depict species of Orchidaceae. Of these few, however, some are of outstanding interest for the history of science and of plant illustration. *Gavilea patagonica*, on page XXX, is just a sketch, but this unassuming drawing only recently brought to light at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, by Phillip Cribb, was prepared on ‘Port Desire’ by Charles Darwin (1833), during his journey aboard the HMS Beagle. Not fortuitously, on the front page is a photograph (not the more stunning I know, to be honest) of Darwin’s Orchid (or Bethlehem orchis, *Angraecum sesquipedale*) shot 120 years later, showing the long spur of the flower that prompted Darwin to predict that it had evolved along with a pollinating insect provided with a proboscis of similar length. Other orchids include *Trichoceros antennifer* by Carol Wooden, (278) opposed the printed bronze sculpture of a *Cattleya* hybrid (Marc Quinn, 279), Pandora Sellar’s *Paphiopedilum spicerianum* (280), a watercolor of *Orchis latifolia* by John Day (288) and the close-up pho-

tograph of a *Cymbidium* hybrid (289) by prominently female-eroticism oriented Japanese photographer Nobuyoshi Araki (290).

The international panel of experts, coordinated by James A. Compton (a professor and plant collector at the University of Reading, with expertise in botany, evolutionary biology and systematics), who selected the 300 images of this book did an outstanding job in choosing a great variety of examples in terms of epochs, styles, techniques, authors, and visions, to illustrate the resilient mankind’s fascination with making images of plants. What makes this book unique, in the crowded landscape of works devoted to botanical illustrations, is the arrangement of the artworks into sequences aimed at provoking contrasts and similarities between pairs of images. So, you have, just to cite a few examples, two black and white images of a foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) made a century away, one in graphite and the other with X-rays (pp. 48–49); two opposed pages with uncurling fern leaves by the great German photographer Karl Blossfeldt (photograph of 1928) and contemporary artist Stephanie Berni (watercolour of 2004) (pp. 86–87); flowers of *Citrus*

*medica* painted by Chinese artist Gao You in 1633 and by American artist Monica E. De Vries Gohlek in 2009 (pp. 92–93); lilies illustrated in watercolor and gouache (Georg Dionysius Ehret) and radiographed (Gary Yeoh) (pp. 159–159), to be compared with a XV century BC Minoan fresco of *Lilium chalconicum* from Santorini; opposed *Aristolochia* spp. rendered in gouache on vellum (Rosalie Demonte) and on large size photo transparency (Honour Hiers Stewart) (pp. 212–213); a somewhat schematic representation of a *Iris* in a Persian *florilegium* of XVII century and the delicate precision of a *Iris* × *germanica* watercolor painted by Albrecht Dürer almost a century before (pp. 262–263); or contemporary images, like the XVII century representations of *Fritillaria* spp., a woodcut by John Parkinson and a watercolor by Alexander Marshall (pp. 302–303), or the lithographs of *Victoria regia* made by English artists William Sharp and Walter Hood Fitch (pp. 266–267).

Sometimes the similitude between opposite page images is not botanical, but visual and more oblique. See, for examples, the cuts of *Geranium* and *Myosotis* showing flower genitalia (pp. 60–61), the microscopic images of roots and leaves rendered with different techniques in different times (pp. 160–161), the pollen grains drawn by Carl Julius Fritzsche in 1837, and photographed by Heiti Paves in 2015 (pp. 204–205), the leaf trichomes engraved in 1665 by Robert Hooke compared to a confocal microscope image taken by John Runions (pp. 214–215), or the viny habits of *Passiflora racemosa* painted in the tropical forest of Central America by Martin Johnson Head and that of *Stigmaphyllon auriculatum*, portrayed by Sidney Parkinson from a plant illicitly collected by Joseph Banks in 1768 on the shores of Rio de Janeiro.

The selection spans over a stunningly large arc of time, beginning with a carving of wheat dating

at XIV century BC, and ending with a 2015 chromogenic print by photographer Thomas Ruff. With an open-minded approach, the curators also included an extraordinary array of visual techniques: copper engravings, watercolors, woodblock prints, pencil, pen and ink, chalk, nature printing (*à la poupée*), acrylic, stipple engravings, collage, tempera, graphite, wood engraving, limestone and marble carving, pressed materials, oil, X-ray, epi-illumination and UV photography, autochromes, light and scanning electron micrographs, printed aluminium and steel, gouaches, aquatints, cybaches, cyanotypes, pigment and silver gelatin prints, *giclées*, electrotypes and alumide prints, 3D dye imbibition prints, dye destruction prints, tapestry, photograms, light-box installations, frescos, laser-etching, scannings, transparency films, confocal microscopic photographs, photogenic negatives, light projections, colotypes, painted bronze and glass sculptures, rubber, cut aluminum, up to the Kirlian photography with which Wataru Yamamoto captures the luminescence produced into a leaf by high-frequency, high-voltage electrical charge (p. 123).

The book is gorgeously succeeding in its attempt to capture nearly two millennia of humans trying to preserve life in botanical art and making the temporary permanent. As such, it is aimed to appeal to a broad range of people, including art lovers, scientists and plant fans. Both visually arresting and informative (the volume includes a Glossary of botanical terms and techniques and Selected biographies of the featured artists), *Plant's* mix of classic and contemporary botanical artworks, of traditional and cutting-edge techniques, of old and new ways to look at plants, undoubtedly shows the potential for the longevity of botanical art and our fascination with it.

*Franco Pupulin*