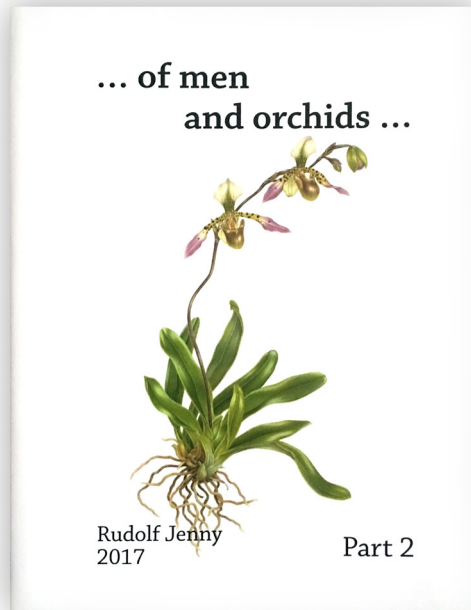


BOOK REVIEWS

...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.



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, tell 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

LITERATURE CITED

- Jenny, R. 2015. ...of men and orchids... Part 1. Quito, Imprenta Mariscal, printed by the author.
 Pupulin, F. 2015. Book reviews. ... of men and orchids... Part 1. Lankesteriana 15(3): 273–274.