

# Schott's orchid drawings

(Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna)

now available on microfiche

3,300 unpublished drawings of the large family of Araceae

Complete with printed alphabetical index (prepared by Dr. Dan Nicholson, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.)

122 microfiches, one binder and index. Order number K-8801/1

The Index is available separately

Heinrich William Schott\* was the first great monographer of the Araceae, a large and mainly tropical family of monocotyledonous plants, and his work is the main foundation upon which subsequent taxonomists of the family have built their research. As a result, the materials with which he worked, which consisted of living plants, illustrations, and herbarium specimens, assume a significance and taxonomic importance unmatched by those of any other worker in this family except perhaps A. Engler.

Schott was for many years the Director of the Imperial Gardens at Schoenbrunn near Vienna, where he formed a large and important collection of living Araceae. A great many of Schott's own taxa were described from this living material, and he invariably had these plants illustrated in colour. In addition, he had pencil drawings made of living and herbarium material available to him from most of the important European herbaria. These illustrations, the complete collection numbering some 3,300, were prepared by a group of artists working at Vienna at that time, Zehner, Saboth, Oberer, Liepoldt, and Nickeli being prominent among them, and they are of quite superb quality, indeed among the finest known examples of botanical illustration.

Due to the destruction of Schott's own herbarium during World War 2, this collection of plates now forms the essential basis for typification of a large proportion of Schott's own taxa of Araceae, at least if they had been preserved in the herbarium at all. For those taxa described from living material grown at Schoenbrunn, no herbarium material exists as far as is known, and a number of workers have recently made searches for possible duplicates without success. In these cases, therefore, the colour illustrations, which give the most detailed and extensive presentation of the plant characters, form the only remaining protologue other than the published descriptions. Moreover, in certain significant cases, the pencil drawings of herbarium specimens are the only surviving evidence of the original specimens, some of which were also destroyed during the war, for instance in Berlin. Many of these illustrations have already been, and will increasingly be, designated as types for Schottian species and are consequently of prime importance to taxonomists of Araceae.

After the completion of A. Engler's great monograph on Araceae in *Das Pflanzenreich* in 1920, the family received scant attention from the botanists, but during the last ten to fifteen years an increasingly large number of workers have begun serious studies on Araceae, ranging from cytogenetic studies related to economically valuable food plants to taxonomic revisions and flora preparation. Most of the major Flora projects on the tropics still lack accounts of the Araceae, and with the present re-awakening of interest in the family it seems very likely that the next ten years will see this work in progress. In addition, the first major survey of the vegetative anatomy of Araceae, at the generic level is about to be initiated, as well as chromosome surveys of the many genera as yet unexamined cytologically. Recently, an international society based at Miami has been established, as well as a monthly bulletin and quarterly journal focussing interest on the horticultural and botanical aspects of the family.

(from the introduction by Dr. Harald Riedl, Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna)

- \* Refs. H. Riedl (1965a) *Taxon* 14 (7): 209-213 (1965)  
—, (1965b) *Ann. Naturhist. Mus. Wien* 68: 3-8 (1965)  
—, (1966) *Taxon* 15: 44 (1966)