

Orchids in the Viceroyalty of Peru: Unpublished iconography from Hipólito Ruiz and José Pavón's Botanical Expedition (1777-1815)

Lima, Cuzco and Machu Picchu – 18th to 24th October, 2013

With the kind help of Dr. Franco Pupulin, professor at the University of Costa Rica, and Dr. Esther García, Vice Director of Science Culture at the Royal Botanical Garden of Madrid, some of the oldest scientific illustrations depicting orchids of the New World, were exhibited in Peru. Commissioned by the General Superintendence of Peru to the artist Francisco Pulgar, these drawings were companion to the report written by Hipólito Ruiz and José Pavón after their voyage through Peru and Chile in times of the Viceroyalty (1777-1815).

From a scientific perspective, this is considered one of the most important expeditions from the 18th Century. The illustrations were delivered to Cadiz in 1788, and then deposited in the Botanical Office of Peruvian Flora, in Madrid. This department was created for the printing of the legendary investigation, '*Flora Peruviana y Chilense*'. Two volumes of this work remain unpublished, due to financial struggles derived from the Napoleonic postwar. Despite this research was left unfinished, it allowed the discovery of more than a hundred new genders and about five hundred new species, which are still identified by the names given by Ruiz and Pavon.

A great part of this material remained without interpretation, until the Royal Botanical Garden of Madrid commissioned a historical research that today allows the printing of 88 illustrations showing the orchids drawn during the expedition.

Dr. Franco Pupulin, in charge of the research with the support of the University of Costa Rica, decided to donate this material to the Peruvian Government and the Museum of Natural History of Peru.

Inkaterra Association, in collaboration with the Peruvian Orchids Club, Chancery and "*Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú*" (PUCP), allowed Mr. Pupulin and Mrs. Garcia's visit for this celebration that took place in Lima, Cuzco and Machu Picchu. This great event not only has great historic value: it also looks forward to the diffusion of Peru's mega biodiversity.



Maxillaria longipetala Ruiz & Pavón

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