

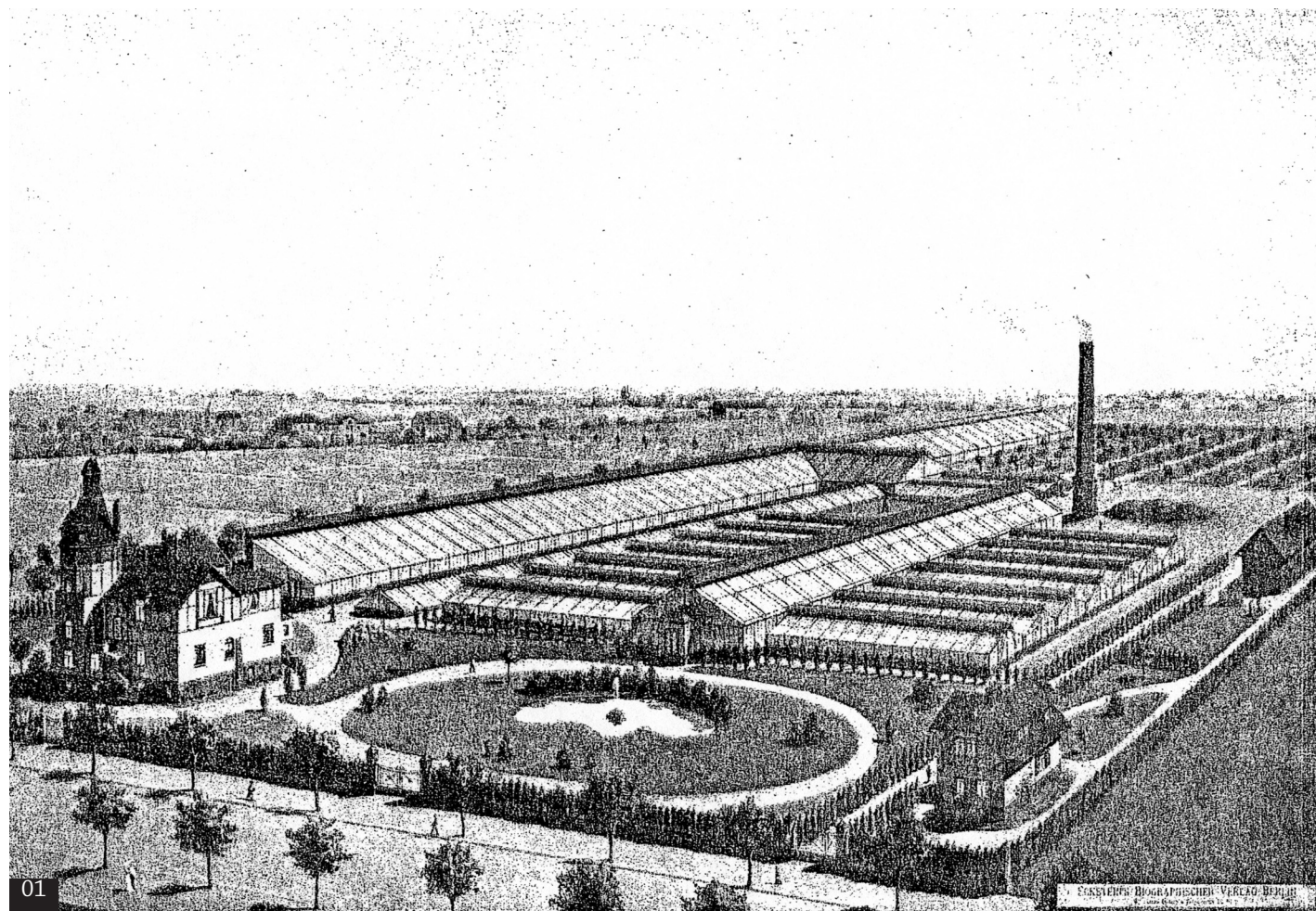
Acineta beyrodtiana and Otto BEYRODT

Acineta cryptodonta Rchb.f., *Bonplandia* 2:92.1854

Acineta beyrodtiana Schlechter, *Orchis* 11(2):28 – 30.1917

Otto BEYRODT was born on 12th of June 1870 in Erfurt, Germany, the second son of J.C. BEYRODT, a partner in the firm of J.C. SCHMIDT in Erfurt. He learned gardening with the firm of OLBERG in Dresden. After completing his apprenticeship he left Germany and went first to England, then to Belgium and then to the United States. Working for different nurseries BEYRODT became very interested in greenhouse technology and the cultivation of orchids for cut-flowers. He came back to Germany in 1893 as his brother had died and he had to take over the running of his estate at Gösen near Eisenberg. In 1900 he returned to Berlin and in

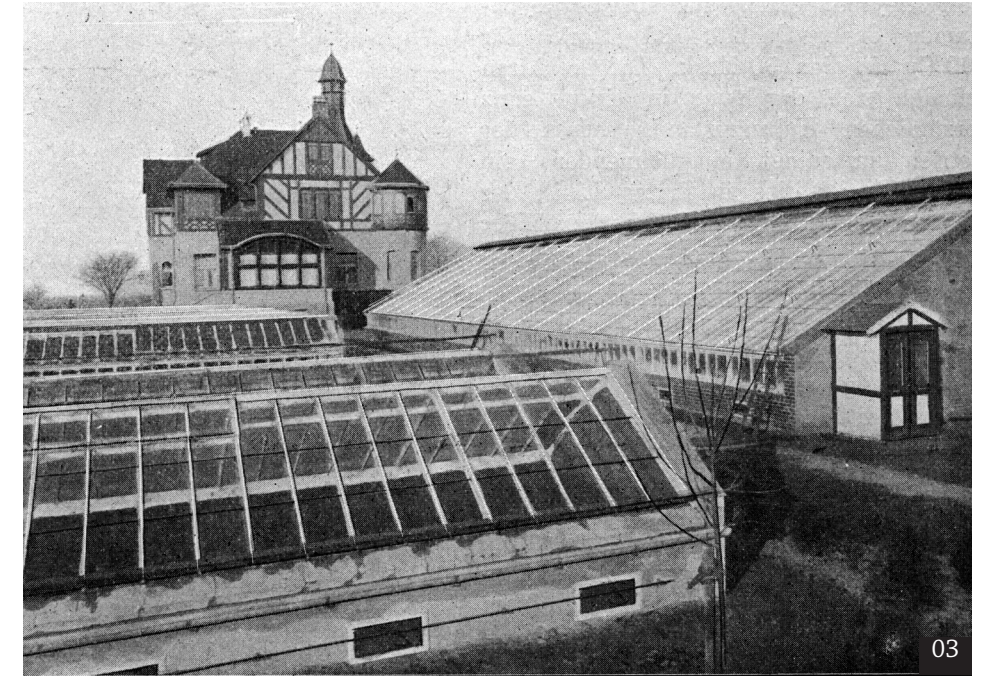
Marienfelde, just south of Berlin, he started his own nursery. The greenhouses were opened in April 1901 and from the very beginning, the business was dedicated to the cultivation of orchids. The experience he had gained during his time in Belgium and the United States helped him to design a most modern and economical enterprise. According to his catalogue of 1902 he had around 75,000 plants under glass, including 25,000 *Cattleya*, 25,000 *Odontoglossum*, 10,000 *Cypripedium* (*Paphiopedilum*), 3,000 *Oncidium*, 3,000 *Dendrobium* and about 9,000 plants in other genera. His nursery was most up-to-date, and the greenhouses had many of the features we see in



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today's nurseries; it covered more than 3,500 m². Only a small part of the cut-flowers he produced were sold in Berlin, the majority were exported to other countries like Hungary, Norway, Sweden and even Russia. It is said that BEYRODT produced about 250 cut-flowers per day and up to 1,000 flowers a day in the period running up to Christmas. The nursery was enlarged for the first time in 1903 and then again in 1906. By 1907 BEYRODT had a total of 7,500 m² under glass with about 150,000 plants in cultivation. A number of gardeners worked for BEYRODT, only a few whose names we know: Ernst MATZ was head-gardener and Thomas SODE was employed mainly travelling for the nursery - each year for 2 to 3 months he was sent to Russia to arrange business and to maintain contact with customers. Other employees included Heinrich VOSS, who was responsible for the culture of *Dendrobium phalaenopsis*, a speciality of the nursery; this started when BEYRODT had a fresh import of 4,500 plants, but after problems with fungus and beetles VOSS had only 2,800 plants left, but in time he learned how to grow them with great perfection and to flower them at the right time. In 1938 VOSS published a very detailed article about the culture of those plants and his experiences in the nursery of BEYRODT (Voss, 1938). Rene GAVEAU was the employee responsible and well known for his culture of *Vanda* and *Cattleya*, he later founded his own orchid nursery in Berlin-Lichtenrade.

- 01 Nursery of Otto Beyrodt in Berlin-Marienfelde from the "Preis-Hauptverzeichnis", 1902
- 02 Portrait of Otto Beyrodt (from *Gartenwelt*, 1923)
- 03 Part of the nursery and the villa of Otto Beyrodt in Berlin-Marienfelde in 1902
- 04 Front-page of the "Preis-Hauptverzeichnis", 1902

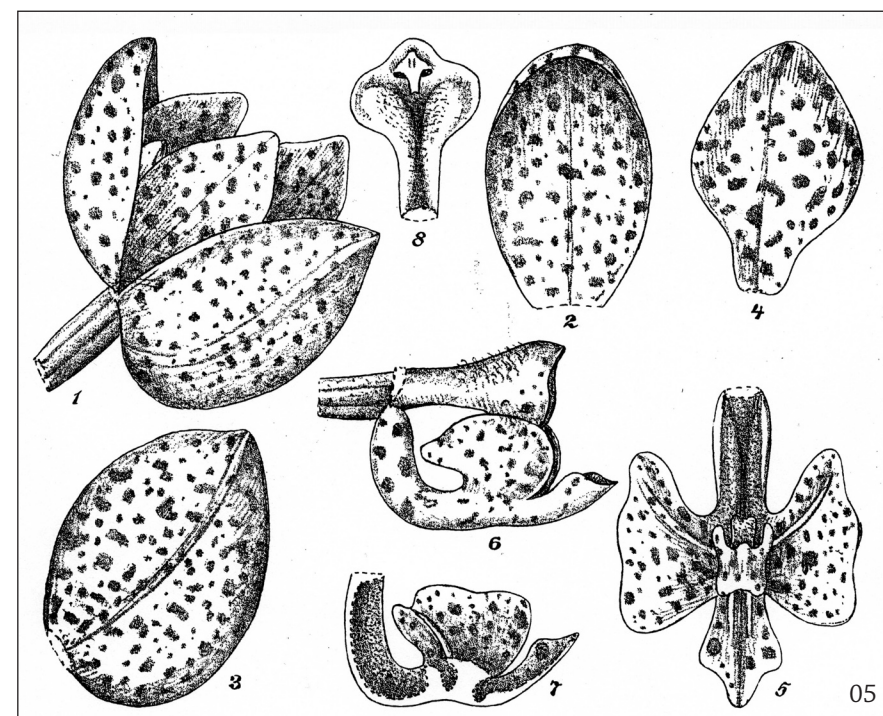
Each year BEYRODT was contracted to send a gardener to Kommerzienrat SCHEIBLER in Lodz, Poland, for 4 to 5 weeks to repot his orchid collection. BEYRODT also had contact with orchid growers from all over Europe and several of them made frequent visits to his nursery and he built up a close relationship with some. Rudolf SCHLECHTER was a regular guest to Marienfelde.

Initially BEYRODT only imported orchids, but later on he started to propagate plants from seed and in 1912 he employed Albert SPRINGER to develop the necessary techniques. The results in the beginning were very poor, Rudolf SCHLECHTER did the pollination of the flowers during his many visits, and instructed SPRINGER to put a few of the larger *Cattleya* plants into the same house where he was trying to germinate the seeds. Asymbiotic propagation was not yet known, so the seeds were scattered on pots with moss and those pots were kept in close contact with the adult plants in order to “infect” them with the necessary mycorrhiza. In time SPRINGER worked out the optimum way to do this and according to his own reports, he raised thousands of seedlings during the 2 years he worked in the nursery. SPRINGER also developed a hybridization program, specialising in *Cattleyas*.

Otto BEYRODT was active as politician in Marienfelde and very active in a number of professional societies. Between 1918 and 1920 he was president of the German Horticultural Society, he was one of the founders of the German Orchid Society and became its President, and was deeply involved in the publication of the journal “Orchis” (later superseded by “Die Orchidee”). He also wrote the chapter about the

cut-flower production of orchids for Rudolf SCHLECHTER’s famous book “Die Orchideen” in 1914. Otto BEYRODT died in a sanatorium in Hirsau after a long and severe illness on 15th of April 1923 aged 53 years. For a short time Erich BURMEISTER, son-in-law of Otto BEYRODT, took over the nursery in Berlin-Marienfelde. Later in the 1920s the nursery was sold to Hermann ROTHE & Co. but was closed after the war in 1945. A part of the orchid collection had been purchased in 1930 by the nursery of Emil MÜNZ in Waiblingen, Germany.

There are only a few species dedicated to Otto BEYRODT, most of them described by Rudolf SCHLECHTER (e.g. *Gongora beyrodtiana*, *Oncidium beyrodtianum*, *Cattleya mossiae* var. *beyrodtiana* and *Coelogyne beyrodtiana*). *Acineta beyrodtiana* was described by Rudolf SCHLECHTER in 1917 in a monographic treatment of the genus in the journal “Orchis” – in 1912 the author received two fresh flowers under the name of *Acineta humboldtii* from a plant cultivated in the collection of



Otto BEYRODT, the origin of the plant was not known but had most probably been imported from Colombia. The type specimen was destroyed in 1943 and the only reference to the plant SCHLECHTER had, is the drawing of the flower and flower-parts, published together with his description in “Orchis” (Schlechter, 1917). Eric A. CHRISTENSON defined SCHLECHTER’s drawing in 2006 as lectotype (Christenson, 2006) of *Acineta beyrodtiana*. In 1999, in the 3rd edition of SCHLECHTER’s “Die Orchideen”, Günter GERLACH cited both *Acineta beyrodtiana* and *Acineta hennisiana* as synonyms of *Acineta moorei*. Following CHRISTENSON, *Acineta beyrodtiana* is a synonym of the much older *Acineta cryptodonta*, described by REICHENBACH in 1854 in “Bonplandia” after a plant from the collection of Senator JENISCH in Hamburg.

The taxonomy of *Acineta* is not simple, the flowers are very fleshy which makes dried flowers extremely difficult to determine. The important parts of the flowers, callus and osmophores are only visible when the flowers are dissected, which means that even good photographs are often useless. Of the few species seen in cultivation there is little information about their origin. The colour of the flowers seems to be more constant in *Acineta* species than in other genera of the subtribe *Stanhopeinae*, nevertheless that is not always a good criterion. There are simply not enough plants available of which we have detailed information about their origin, this includes those of which we have flowers preserved in alcohol (they lose the colour, but unlike dried flowers they keep the shape). Additionally there is minimal information about pollinator and fragrance-composition.

Cattleya warscewiczii was described in 1854 by REICHENBACH in the journal “Bonplandia”, based



- 05 Drawing of *Acineta beyrodtiana* by Rudolf Schlechter from the journal *Orchis* (1917)
- 06 Cross-section of a flower of *Acineta moorei* (with permission by Dick Hartley, England)
- 07 Inflorescence of *Acineta moorei* as *Acineta beyrodtiana*
- 08 Single flower of *Acineta moorei* as *Acineta beyrodtiana*
- 09 Close-up of *Acineta moorei*

on plants collected by Josef von WARSCEWICZ in 1848 in Colombia. WARSCEWICZ lost almost all of the collected plants in a shipwreck on the Rio Magdalena, and went back to Poland in 1853 with very few living plants of the species most of which then quickly died in cultivation. REICHENBACH described the plant from dried flowers supplied by WARSCEWICZ. In 1873 Jean LINDEN and Edouard ANDRE described the same species as *Cattleya gigas* in "L'illustration Horticole". Other synonyms of *Cattleya warscewiczii* are *Cattleya imperialis* and *Cattleya sanderiana*, both of which are horticultural names. *Cattleya warscewiczii* var. *Frau*. Mélanie Beyrodt was the original name of a clone of *Cattleya warscewiczii*, selected from a large import from Colombia by Otto BEYRODT's nursery and was named after Mélanie, Otto's wife. At the time when the plant was selected, the term "variety" was used in a different way than it is today. Today "variety" is a taxonomical rank below species and subspecies, but about 100 years ago the term "variety" was often used for a single clone (equivalent to the name given today to awarded plants, so in fact *Cattleya warscewiczii* 'Frau Melanie Beyrodt' would be the correct way to name the plant). This very famous clone was a *semi-alba* form of the species. Another *semi-alba* type was described in 1893 by James O'BRIEN as *Cattleya warscewiczii* var. *francovillensis* in "Gardeners' Chronicle" and in "Orchid Album" of 1907 it was illustrated as *Cattleya gigas* var. *francovillensis*. The plant was a selected clone from the collection of the Duc de MASSA at Chateau de Franconville, France. In fact our plant should be named *Cattleya warscewiczii* var. *semi-alba* 'Frau Melanie Beyrodt' because it was nothing other than a selected clone of this variety. Only divisions or



mericlones of the original plant from BEYRODT should be named *Cattleya warscewiczii* var. *Frau Mélanie Beyrodt* or preferably *Cattleya warscewiczii* var. *semi-alba* 'Frau Melanie Beyrodt'.

In 1907, Alfred Celestin COGNIAUX and Alphonse GOOSSENS published in "Dictionnaire Iconographique des Orchidées" a beautiful illustration of *Cattleya warscewiczii* var. *Mme. Mélanie Beyrodt* (Frau Melanie Beyrodt) from the collection of Count Firmin LAMBEAU of Brussels, Belgium. Divisions of BEYRODT's selected form of *Cattleya warscewiczii* were distributed to many collections and are today still in cultivation. The original plant was awarded by the Royal Horticultural Society in 1904 at the Holland House show and received an FCC (First Class Certificate). Several plants of *Cattleya warscewiczii* var. *Frau Melanie Beyrodt* have been presented at exhibitions and to the Orchid Committee of the R.H.S. e.g. by John LEEMAN and again by H.T. PITT, both in 1915. In the "Orchid Review" of 1915 we read: "How long previously the variety may have been known we cannot say, but three years later (1907) Mr. J.M. Black, speaking of Orchids at Enfield,



- 10 Drawing of *Cattleya warscewiczii* 'Frau Mélanie Beyrodt' by Nellie Roberts, FCC-plant from 12th of July 1904 (scan with permission from the RHS, Lindley Library, London)
- 11 Flower of *Cattleya warscewiczii* 'Frau Mélanie Beyrodt' FCC/RHS
- 12 Plate of *Cattleya warscewiczii* 'Frau Mélanie Beyrodt' after a drawing by A. Goossens from Dictionnaire Iconographique des Orchidées, 1907

alluded to *Cattleya gigas* (*warscewiczii*) *Frau Melanie Beyrodt* as "the famous albino which this firm (Hugh Low & Co.) has placed in nearly all the good *Cattleya* collections in Europe ... The finest plant that we remember to have seen was exhibited by Lt.-Col. George L. Holford at the R.H.S. meeting on July 21st, 1908. It bore 22 flowers and received a cultural commendation".

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