



A Swedish collection of medicinal plants from Cameroon

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Abstract

A collection of 32 botanically identified medicinal plants from the slopes of Mt. Cameroon made by two Swedish settlers in the beginning of the last century is described and the literature is followed up. The drug names were found to be unaltered during the century passed.
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The Department of Pharmacology of the Caroline Institute (Karolinska Institute), Stockholm, Sweden, previously had a large collection of drugs. When the Institute moved in the late 1940s to new premises in Solna, space was no longer available for the large drug collection in the Department of Pharmacology. One of the authors (F.S.), active at that time at this department, participated in the packing of the drug collection in 54 wooden boxes, to be sent to the Department of Pharmacognosy of, at that time, Royal Pharmaceutical Institute in Stockholm. In addition to these boxes, there was a cupboard containing medicinal plants from Cameroon. When F.S. returned to the Royal Pharmaceutical Institute in 1954, the wooden boxes were still in the office and unpacked, and the cupboard was locked.

The cupboard (Fig. 1) with its collection of 32 botanically identified and some unidentified medicinal plants from Cameroon is the starting point for this paper (Santesson, 1926) (Table 1). This cupboard was donated in 1924 to the drug-museum in the Caroline Institute in honor of Professor Gustav von Düben, specialist on the ethnography of Africa, by two Swedish business men: Knut Knutson and Georg Waldau, one of them (G.W.) had been active for more than 40

years on the southwest slopes of Mount Cameroon. These gentlemen have also been mentioned in the polite literature by the Swedish author Per Wästberg (Wästberg, 1986, 1987).

For about one decade this cupboard was unattended in the Department of Pharmacognosy, but when one of the authors (F.S.) traveled in 1965 to Cameroon to collect African *Strychnos* species for phytochemical investigation, the interest arose to reinvestigate the drugs of the Knutson–Waldau collection.

In this paper, the 32 identified medicinal plants will be dealt with: what was known by Professor Santesson and what is known in 1993, after 80 years, when Professor Lars Bohlin and Professor Finn Sandberg made a revisit in Cameroon. The drug names were found to be unaltered during the century past. This is in agreement with our findings in other areas in Africa, among others in Central African Republic and in Congo, Brazzaville. The order of the drugs is the same as Professor Santesson has used, i.e., the plants are arranged according to plant families. It should be mentioned that the taxonomic identification of the drug samples was made mainly by Professor Robert Fries (Stockholm) and Professor J. Milbraed (Berlin, Dahlem).

New references mean all references after Professor C.G. Sanderson's original paper in 1926 (Santesson, 1926).

In the drug collection, unidentified drugs nos. 33–42 are not dealt with in this publication.

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Fig. 1. Cupboard, containing drugs from Cameroon, donated to Karolinska Institutet (Caroline Institute) by G. Valda and K. Knutson as a sign of thankfullness and respect to the deceased Professor Gustaf v. Düben.

Table 1
Plant Drugs (Knutson-Waldau collection) at the Division of Pharmacognosy,
Biomedical Center, Uppsala, Sweden

Family	Asteraceae (Compositae)
No. 1	<p><i>Spilanthes acmella</i> L. Vernacular name: Sekke Plant part used: Herb (entire plant) Local use: Against snakebite and rheumatic fever (Santesson, 1926) New ref.: Larvicidal effect (Pitasawat et al., 1998); bioactive amides (Ramsewak et al., 1999); allergenic activity (Mondal et al., 1998); convulsion (Moreira et al., 1989); analgesic effect of flowers (Ansari et al., 1988); essential oil (Lemos et al., 1991); new amides (Sandberg, 1980; Greger et al., 1985; Mukharya and Ansari, 1987); actinolides (Bohlmann et al., 1985); pungent alkamides (Nagashima and Nakatani, 1992; Nakatani and Nagashima, 1992); photochemical examination (Tiwari and Kakkar, 1990); amyrin, sitosterol (Krishnaswamy et al., 1975)</p>
No. 2	<p><i>Microglossa volubilis</i> D.C. Vernacular name: Bendem-bende Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against strong cough (Santesson, 1926) New ref.: Used against sore eyes, ring worm, cataract (Dalziel, 1995); diterpenes (Zdero et al., 1990); acetylenic glucosides (Rücker et al., 1992)</p>

Table 1 (Continued)

No. 3	<p>Cucurbitaceae <i>Coccinia barteri</i> (Hook. f.) Keay Vernacular name: Efoto Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against deafness New ref.: None</p>
No. 4	<p>Acanthaceae <i>Mimulopsis violacea</i> Lindau Vernacular name: Majamanjumbe Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against gonorrhea New ref.: New species (Troupin, 1982); leaf structure (Karlström, 1978)</p>
No. 5	<p>Latin name: Unknown Vernacular name: Eisinga mokusi Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against stomachache New ref.: No specific for Eisinga mokusi</p>
No. 6	<p>Latin name: Unknown Vernacular name: Ebäeba Plant part use: Root bark Local use: Against ascaris New ref.: No specific for Ebäeba</p>
No. 7	<p>Bignoniaceae <i>Kigelia acutifolia</i> Engl. Vernacular name: Bulule Plant part used: Stem bark Local use: Against snakebite, dysentery New ref.: Santesson tested a water extract on two <i>Rana temporari</i> without any effect at all (Santesson, 1929); new coumarins (Govindachari et al., 1971); new naphtoquinone and lignan derivatives (Inoue et al., 1981; Moideen et al., 1999; Weiss et al., 2000); new terpenoid aldehydes (Joshi et al., 1982). The fruit is also used: against dysentery, as laxative; against hemorrhoids (Dalziel, 1995); antibacterial and antifungal activity (Akunyili et al., 1991; Binutu et al., 1996); activity against melanoma (Houghton et al., 1994)</p>
No. 8	<p>Solanaceae <i>Solanum</i> sp. Vernacular name: Etnangonga Plant part used: Root, fruit Local use: Against thorax diseases New ref.: No specific for Etangong</p>
No. 9	<p>Lamiaceae (Labiatae) Latin name: Unknown Vernacular name: Esamoimbar Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against syphilis New ref.: None specific for Esamoimbar</p>
No. 10	<p>Verbenaceae <i>Clerodendrum sylvaticum</i> Henriques Vernacular name: Mosongo songo Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against rheumatism, snakebite, thoracic pains New ref.: No references on <i>C. sylvaticum</i></p>
No. 10a	<p>Melastomataceae <i>Dissotis rotundifolia</i> (Sm.) Triana Vernacular name: Njanga Plant part used: Herb (entire plant) Local use: Against severe cough New ref.: Hydrolyzable tannins (Yoshida et al., 1987);</p>

Table 1 (Continued)

No. 11	Rhizophoraceae <i>Rhizophora mangle</i> L. Vernacular name: Elgnamofosir Plant part used: Stem bark Local use: Against leprosy, malaria, catarrh and internal bleedings, externally for treatment of wounds New ref.: Triterpenoids with insecticidal effect (Williams, 1999); antimicrobial properties (Rojas Hernandez and Coto Perez, 1978); translocation of four organochlorine compounds (Walsh et al., 1974); immunochemical studies of mangle gum (Rao et al., 1971)
No. 12	Violaceae <i>Rinorea monticola</i> M. Brandt Vernacular name: Lindu Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against syphilis New ref.: None
No. 13	Sterculiaceae <i>Sterculia tragacantha</i> Lindl. Vernacular name: Uduto, Eugungo Plant part used: Branches of the tree Local use: Against chronic syphilis New ref.: None
No. 14	Vitaceae <i>Leea guineese</i> G. Don Vernacular name: Engälakoto Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against stomachache New ref.: Used as an expectorant, uterine contraction, contains sterols, anthocyanins, flavonoids (Djoko et al., 1983); juice of leaves as eye drops, young leaves are rubbed on the chest against pains, and against vomiting for small children (Thomas et al., 1989)
No. 15	Rhamnaceae <i>Maesopsis eminii</i> Engl. (Syn.: <i>Karlea berchemioides</i> Pierre) Vernacular name: Esenge Plant part used: Root bark Local use: Against edema New ref.: None
No. 15a	Icacinaceae <i>Lasianthera africana</i> P. Beauv. Vernacular name: Be'lele Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against stomach pains New ref.: None
No. 16	Anacardiaceae <i>Spondias mombin</i> L. Vernacular name: Monganga Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against chronic syphilis New ref.: Antimicrobial (Abo et al., 1999; Rodrigues et al., 2000); wound-healing activity (Villegas et al., 1997); antibacterial and molluscicidal effect (Corthout et al., 1994); betalactamase inhibitor (Coates et al., 1994); abortifacient activity (Offiah and Anyanwu, 1989)
No. 17	Euphorbiaceae <i>Jatropha curcas</i> L.

Table 1 (Continued)

No. 18	Vernacular name: Big nut Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against rheumatic fever New ref.: Toxic activity (Rug and Ruppel, 2000); esterase and lipase activity (Staubmann et al., 1999); nutritional studies (Makkar and Becker, 1999); disinfectant/antiparasitic activities (Fagbenro-Beyioku et al., 1998); antiviral properties (Matsuse et al., 1999); antinutrient and toxic factors in seeds (Makkar et al., 1998); in vitro evaluation (Rai, 1996); molluscicidal activity (Liu et al., 1997); abortive effect (Goonasekera et al., 1995); toxicity in chicks (Ahmed and Adam, 1979a; Joubert et al., 1984; Abdu-Aguye et al., 1986; el Badwi et al., 1995); cyclic octapeptides (van der Berg et al., 1995); cicatrization effect (Salas et al., 1994); effect on hisex chicks and calves (Ahmed and Adam, 1979b; el Badwi et al., 1992; el Badwi and Adam, 1992); carcain, protease from latex (Nath and Dutta, 1991); curcacycline A (van der Berg et al., 1995); tumor promoter (Hirota et al., 1988); gout (Adam and Magzoub, 1975); induction of mutation (Horiuchi et al., 1987; Rojanapo et al., 1987); inhibition of protein synthesis (Stirpe et al., 1976); phytochemistry (Khafagy et al., 1977); toxic effects in mice (Adam, 1974)
No. 19	<i>Alchornea cordifolia</i> (Schum. et Thonn.) Müll.-Arg. Vernacular name: Bondji (or Dibobunji) Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against dysentery New ref.: Against gonorrhea and framboesia (Mildbraed, 1913); against stomach pains, tooth pains and as chewing sticks; male inflorescences for treatment of wounds; for treatment of umbilical abscess (Thomas et al., 1989); used as abortive and aphrodisiac (Walker, 1952, 1953); antibacterial effects (Ogunlana and Ramstad, 1975; Lamikanra et al., 1990; Okeke et al., 1999); antiamoebic and spasmolytic activities (Stirpe et al., 1976; Tona et al., 1998; Tona et al., 2000); antidiarrhoeal effect (Tona et al., 1999); alchornoic acid in seeds (Kleiman et al., 1977); quercetin and quercetin-derivatives (Ogungbamila and Samuelsson, 1990); content of tannins in leaves and bark (Bennet, 1950); isolation of alchorhein and derivatives and use as aphrodisiac, against scabies and gastrointestinal problems (Khuong-Huu et al., 1970; Goutarel and Khuong-Huu-Laine, 1972; Khuong-Huu et al., 1972); anticholinergic effect (Sandberg and Cronlund, 1982)
No. 19a	<i>Spondianthus preussii</i> Engl. (Syn: <i>Megaborea trilesis</i> Pierre) Vernacular name: Bojande (Wujunde) Plant part used: Stem bark Local use: Rat poison New ref.: Pharmacological screening (Sandberg et al., 1987); a toxic plant to African cattle (Sere et al., 1982); curcubitacin (Tessier and Paris, 1974)
No. 20	<i>Phyllanthus odontadenius</i> Müll.-Arg. Local use: For intoxication New ref.: Unusual tannin (Foo and Wong, 1992); phyllanthostatin (Pettit and Schaufelberger, 1988; Pettit et al., 1990); hydrolysable tannins (Yoshida et al., 1992) Local use: For intoxication
	Meliaceae <i>Heckeldora staudtii</i> (Harms) Staner Vernacular name: Libenge Plant part used: Root bark and branches Local use: Against abscess in the stomach New ref.: None

Table 1 (Continued)

No. 21	<i>Trichilia heudelotii</i> Planch ex Oliv. Vernacular name: Efefe Plant part used: Fruit Local use: Against rheumatic fever New ref.: Isolation, structure of trichilins (Nakani et al., 1981); prieuriunoside (Adam, 1974); anti-inflammatory effect (Nunes et al., 1997; Benencia et al., 2000a,b); antiplasmodial activity (El Tahir et al., 1999); phagocytic activity (Benencia et al., 1999); limonoids (Castro et al., 1996; Gunatilaka et al., 1998); prostaglandin-synthesis inhibitor (Jager et al., 1996); against schistosomiasis (Sparg et al., 2000); antimalarial activity (Adam and Magzoub, 1975; Traore-Keita et al., 2000)
No. 22	Rubiaceae <i>Fagara macrophylla</i> Oliv. Vernacular name: Vuonge (Verongo, Veronge) Plant part used: Leaves and root bark Local use: Leaves against cardiac palpitations, and root bark against syphilis New ref.: Antitumor agents (Wall et al., 1987)
No. 23	Papilionaceae [Leguminosae] <i>Desmodium adscendens</i> D.C. Vernacular name: Tombolombo Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against catching a cold New ref.: Smooth muscles inhibitions (Addy, 1989); effect on arachidonic acid metabolism (Addy, 1992); effects on anaphylaxis (Addy and Awaumey, 1984); effect on guinea pig airways (Addy and Burka, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990); anaphylactic reactions (Addy and Dzandu, 1986); inhibition of oxygenation (Addy and Schwartzman, 1992); plants that heal (Ampofo, 1997); activation of potassium channels (McManus et al., 1993); effects on rodents (N'gouemo et al., 1996)
No. 24	<i>Physostigma venenosum</i> Balf. Vernacular name: Calabar-beans Plant part used: Seed Local use: Against rheumatic fever New ref.: The pure alkaloid physostigmine is used since time past in ophthalmology as an anti-acetylcholin esterase agent (Robinson and Robinson, 1968); absolute configuration (Longmore and Robinson, 1969)
No. 25	Capparidaceae <i>Cleome ciliata</i> Schum. et Thonn. Vernacular name: Lovanga Plant part used: Herb (entire plant) Local use: Against deafness New ref.: Microbiological profile (Utsalo et al., 1990)
No. 26	Annonaceae <i>Xylopia aethiopica</i> (Dun.) A. Rich Vernacular name: Alligator pepper Plant part used: Fruit with seeds Local use: Against catching cold, cardiac palpitations New ref.: Key aroma compounds (Tairu et al., 1999); composition of seeds and oil (Barminas et al., 1999); trachylobane diterpenoid (Nguela et al., 1998); isolation of bioactive alkaloids (Harrigan et al., 1994); influence on the mutagenicity of aflatoxin (Osowole et al., 1992); antimicrobial properties (Boakyé-Yiadom et al., 1977)
No. 27	Menispermaceae <i>Jateorhiza strigosa</i> Miers Vernacular name: Dimone Plant part used: Leaves

Table 1 (Continued)

No. 28	Local use: Against snakebite New ref.: Pharmacological tests on frogs (Santesson, 1929)
No. 29	Amaranthaceae <i>Cyathula prostrata</i> (L.) Blume (Syn.: <i>Cyathula geniculata</i> Lour.) Vernacular name: Krokos Plant part used: Leaves and whole herb Local use: The leaves are used against rheumatic fever. The herb is used against dysentery New ref.: Against stomach pain (Thomas et al., 1989); insect metamorphosing substance (Hikino et al., 1970a,b); sengosterone (Hikino et al., 1969); insect-molting substances (Takemoto et al., 1968); arthropod molting hormone (Hikino and Takemoto, 1972); effect on protein synthesis (Otaka et al., 1968)
No. 30	<i>Myrianthus arboreus</i> P. Beauv. Vernacular name: Bokekky (Wokaku) Plant part used: Leaves Local use: Against dysentery New ref.: Myrianthines A–C (Marchand et al., 1968)
No. 31	Piperaceae <i>Piper guineense</i> Schum. et Thonn. Vernacular name: Jove, Ili Plant part used: Fruit Local use: Against chronic syphilis in the throat; against rheumatism New ref.: Effect on skeletal muscle of rat and frog (Udoh et al., 1999); uterine muscle activity (Udoh, 1999); nutrient and antinutrient composition (Isong and Essien, 1996); anticonvulsant effects (Abila et al., 1993); insecticidal components (Gbewonoya and Candy, 1992); wisanine (Ayitey-Smith and Addae-Mensah, 1977); constituents (Dwuma-Badu et al., 1976); dihydrocubebin (Dwuma-Badu et al., 1975)
No. 32	Palmae <i>Raphia vinifera</i> Beauv. Vernacular name: Atat Plant part used: Fruit Local use: against leprosy together with bark of <i>Rhizophora</i> sp. In tropical West Africa it is used for wine production New ref.: None for specific medical use
	Gramineae <i>Eleusine indica</i> Gaertn Vernacular name: Esinge-Singe Plant part used: Whole herb Local use: Against hemorrhagic cough New ref.: Double mutation (Anthony and Hussey, 1999); resistant biotype (Yamamoto and Baird, 1999; Zeng and Baird, 1999); antimicrobial drug (Yamamoto et al., 1998); identification of the "A" genome (Hilu, 1988); root growth (Wong and Lau, 1985)

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