The Brandberg revisited

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ABSTRACT

14 species of vascular plants new to the Brandberg are reported, mainly from the Naib area in the northwestern part of the mountain.

During a plant collecting tour in South West Africa in June—July 1974, I had the opportunity of again visiting the Brandberg. A younger Swedish botanist, Jan Lundgren, accompanied me, and we were travelling in an ordinary two-wheel car. In spite of this we managed to drive along the west side of the mountain, across the Numas and Naib rivers as far north as a smaller valley between the Naib and Karoab river valleys.

This areas carried an interesting flora with many representatives of the Kaoko element, such as the shrubby Commiphora kraeuseliana and C. wildii, the more or less herbaceous Boerhavia deserticola, Hermannia amabilis, Merremia guerichii, Aptosimum angustifolium and Sutera corymbosa, the grass Asthenatherum mossamedense growing in tall tufts, and the odd mixture of Acacia montis-usti and Welwitschia mirabilis.

Only the lower slopes of the mountain were investigated, and about 50 numbers of vascular plants were collected. Some of these were not previously known from the Brandberg — at least they were not recorded in my flora of the mountain (Nordenstam 1974). One species of *Amaranthus* even turned out to be undescribed, but it has since been published as *A. praetermissus* Brenan (1981).

It may be of interest to list the previously unrecorded species. The sequence follows Merxmüller (1966–72). N. & L. stands for Nordenstam & Lundgren, and the first set of the collection is housed in the herbarium of the Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm (S).



Figure 1: The lower Tsisab riverbed with Scirpus laeteflorens and Ricinus communis. - Photo author July 1974.

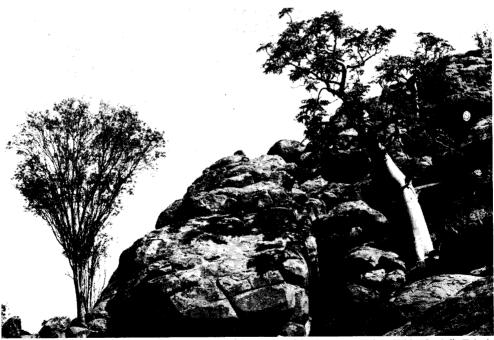


Figure 2: Acacia montis-usti and Moringa ovalifolia on granitic slopes near the "White Lady", Tsisab Valley. — Photo author July 1974.

Molluginaceae: Limeum myosotis H. Walter (N. & L. 864)

Amaranthaceae: Amaranthus praetermissus Brenan (N. & L. 876)

Fabaceae: Lotononis platycarpa (Viv.) Pic. Ser. s. lat. (N. & L. 859)

Psoralea obtusifolia DC. (N. & L. 871)

Euphorbiaceae: Euphorbia inaequilatera Sond. (N. & L. 836)

Phyllanthus maderaspatensis L. (N. & L. 835)

Tiliaceae: Corchorus tridens L. (N. & L. 873)

Rubiaceae: Kohautia lasiocarpa Klotzsch

Scrophulariaceae: Anticharis imbricata Schinz (N. & L. 849)

Anticharis linearis (Benth.) Hochst. ex Aschers.

(N. & L. 850)

Asteraceae: Helichrysum roseo-niveum Marl. & O. Hoffm. (N. & L. 846)

We also visited the lower Tsisab valley on the eastern side of the mountain, where about 30 numbers were collected. Although this is the most frequented part of the mountain, a few previously unrecorded species were found, viz.

Amaranthaceae: Amaranthus dinteri Schinz (N. & L. 887)

Asteraceae: Senecio consanguineus DC. (N. & L. 884)

Poaceae: Stipagrotis damarensis (Mez) De Winter (N. & L. 904)

The flora was well developed after the plentiful rains earlier in the year. The Tsisab still carried clear running water and was flanked in parts by lush stands of sedge (Scirpus laeteflorens), grasses and tall herbs (Fig. 1). Two interesting members of the Kaoko element were seen in their type localities, viz. the grass Eragrostis aristata and the half-shrubby composite Antiphiona fragrans. Again we were reminded of the unique nature and deeply impressed by the singular beauty of this gem among African mountains.

LITERATURE CITED

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