

Secondary metabolites from *Triclisia gilletii* (De Wild) Staner (Menispermaceae) with antimycobacterial activity against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*

Eric Robert Tiam^a, Dominique Serge Ngono Bikobo^{a,e}, Auguste Abouem A Zintchem^{a,b}, Norbert Mbabi Nyemeck II^{a,c}, Esther Del Florence Moni Ndedi^d, Patrick Hervé Betote Diboué^d, Maximilienne Ascension Nyegue^d, Alex de Théodore Atchadé^a, Dieudonné Emmanuel Pegnyemb^a, Christian G. Bochet^e and Ulrich Koert^c

^aFaculty of Science, Department of Organic Chemistry, University of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé, Cameroon;

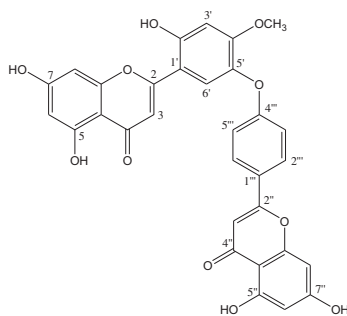
^bDepartment of Chemistry, Higher Training College, University of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé, Cameroon; ^cFaculty of Chemistry, Philipps-Universität Marburg, Marburg, Germany; ^dFaculty of Science, Department of Microbiology, University of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé, Cameroon; ^eDepartment Chemie, Universität Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland

ABSTRACT

Triclisinone (**2**), a new ochnaflavone derivative, was isolated from the aerial parts of *Triclisia gilletii*, along with known drypemolundein B (**1**) and eight other known compounds. The chemical shifts of drypemolundein B (**1**) have been partially revised based on reinterpretation of NMR spectroscopic data. The eight other secondary metabolites are composed of: (+)-nonacosan-10-ol (**3**); stigmasterol (**4**), 3-O- β -D-glucopyranosylstigmasterol (**5**), 3-O- β -D-glucopyranosylstigmasterol (**6**); oleanic acid (**7**); myricetin (**8**), quercetin (**9**) and 3-methoxyquercetin (**10**). Their structures were elucidated using IR, MS, NMR 1D and 2D, ¹H and ¹³C and comparison with literature data. Furthermore, compounds **1**, **2**, **5**, **6**, **8**, **9** and the crude extract were tested against *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Compounds **1**, **2**, **8** and **9** displayed moderate to very good activity against resistant strain (codified AC 45) of *M. tuberculosis* with minimum inhibitory concentrations MICs ranging from 3.90 to 62.5 μ g/mL.

KEYWORDS

Triclisia gilletii;
Menispermaceae;
ochnaflavone derivative;
NMR chemical shift analysis;
antimycobacterial activity



Triclisinone (**2**)

CONTACT Dominique Serge Ngono Bikobo ✉ ngono_serge@yahoo.fr, sngono@uy1.uninet.cm

Supplemental data for this article

1. Introduction

Despite the progress in tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis, treatment and prevention efforts, the epidemic remains one of the top 10 causes of the death worldwide, killing about 1.4 million people each year. In 2014, there were an estimated 10.4 million cases of tuberculosis with over 400 000 deaths resulting from TB disease among people living with HIV. The proportion of TB cases living with HIV was highest in the Africa Region where about 81% of people had been notified among men, women and children (WHO 2016). In 2015, there were an estimated 480 000 new cases of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and an additional 100 000 people with rifampicin-resistant TB (RR-TB) who were also newly eligible for MDR-TB treatment. The aspiring objective of halving TB prevalence rates by 2015 as compared with the reference line of 1990 could not be completed in Africa (WHO 2014). Because of this increasing drug resistance incidence, there is an urgent need for new and effective anti-TB agents as an alternative to conventional drugs currently in use (Bergmann and Woods 1998). In this context, the search for new natural products from Cameroonian medicinal plants could provide new leads to antimycobacterial drugs.

The genus *Triclisia* comprises 20 species throughout the world with 12 in tropical Africa Region (Troupin et al. 1956). Plants belonging to that genus possess potential therapeutic values which have been used since very ancient times to cure various ailments and infectious diseases (Bouquet 1969; Disengomoka et al. 1983). *Triclisia gilletii* (Menispermaceae) is a robust creeper of up to 10 cm diameter, of the lowland dense rain-forest occurring from Liberia to Angola (Troupin et al. 1951, 1962). In some areas, the plant is used in the treatment of several ailments such as: malaria, venereal diseases, epileptic attacks, edema, anemia, diarrhea, stomach problems, leprosy, mental health problems, dysentery, respiratory diseases and convulsive coughing (Bouquet 1969; Kokwaro 1993; Burkill 1997; Neuwinger 1998; Mesia et al. 2008). According to the literature data, *Triclisia* species contains mainly bisbenzylisoquinoline (BBIQ) alkaloids (Schiff 1983; Murebwayire et al. 2006, 2009; Uche et al. 2017), morphinan alkaloids (Spiff et al. 1981) and other amide alkaloids (Murebwayire et al. 2006; Samita et al. 2017). Previous reports from *T. gilletii* revealed the presence of BBIQ (Tackie et al. 1973; Dwuma-Badu et al. 1975; Owusu et al. 1981). We herein report the isolation and elucidation of constituents present in the needles of *T. gilletii*. *In vitro* inhibitory activity of methanol extract and some isolated compounds was as well examined against a clinical isolate strain of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* resistant to isoniazid and codified AC 45. Moreover, a few natural products like amide alkaloids, bisbenzylisoquinolines, pyrrolodiquinolines and vermehotin were previously found to exhibit potent antimycobacterial activity against multidrug-resistant isolates of *M. tuberculosis* (Ganihigama et al. 2015; Sureram et al. 2012).

2. Results and discussion

The structural identifications of the compounds **3**, **4**, **5**, **6**, **7**, **8**, **9** and **10** were based on comparison of their physical and spectral data with authentic samples or those already reported (Figure 1). Their assignments were allowed as: (+)-nonacosan-10-ol (**3**) (Aarnoud et al. 2007), stigmasterol (**4**) (Budavari 1996), 3-O- β -D-glucopyranosylstigmasterol (**5**) (Rubinstein et al. 1976), 3-O- β -D-glucopyranosylstigmasterol (**6**) (Ngono et al. 2014), oleanic acid (**7**)

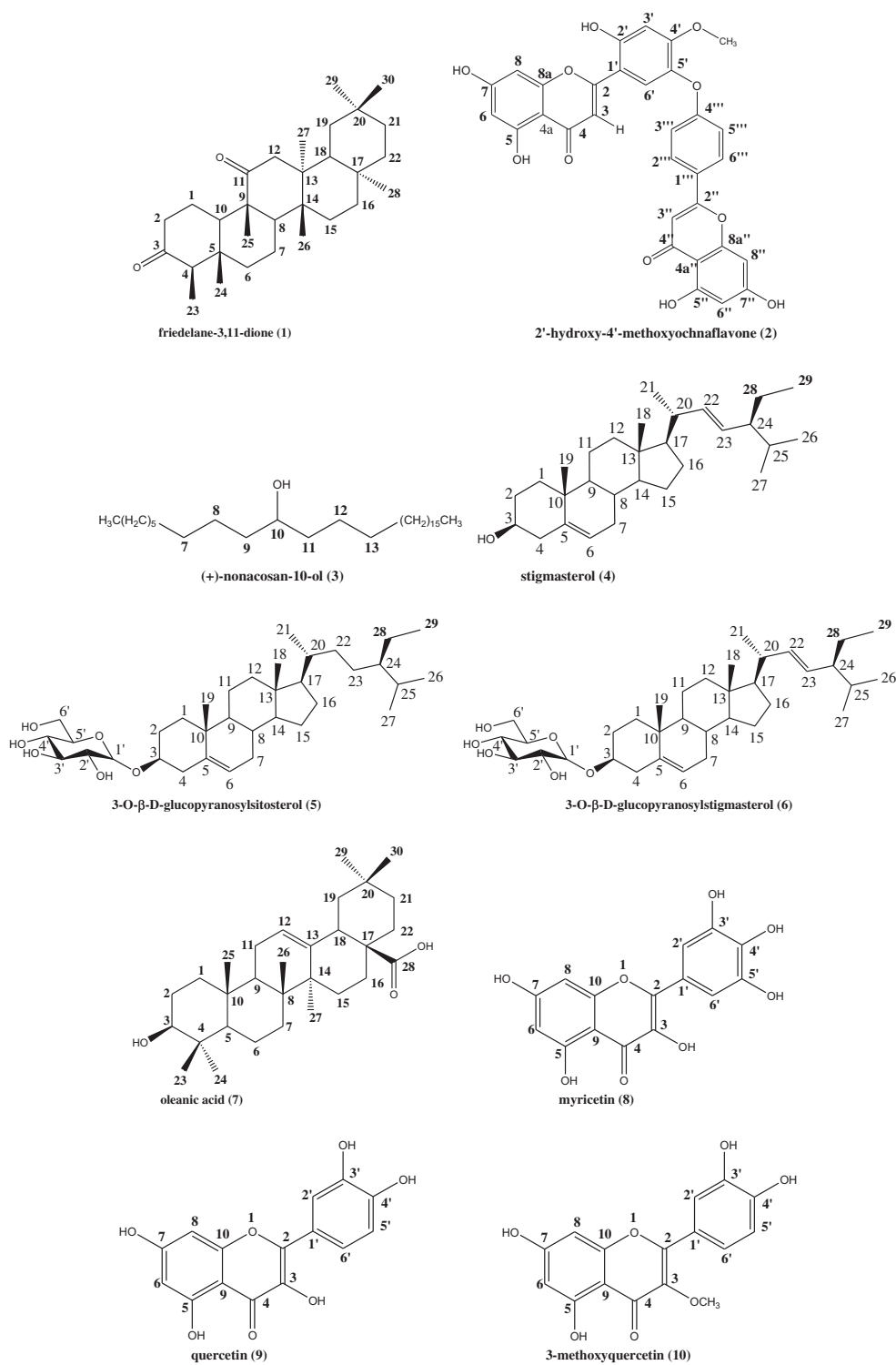


Figure 1. Compounds isolated from the leaves of *Triclisia gillettii*.

(Higuchi et al. 2008), myricetin (**8**) (Hinou et al. 1988), quercetin (**9**) (Güvenalp and Demirezer 2005) and 3-methoxyquercetin (**10**) (Peng et al. 2003).

2.1. Revision of compound 1

Compound **1** was isolated as a white solid from $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{MeOH}$ mixture, m.p. 281–283 °C. Its molecular formula was deduced to be $\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{48}\text{O}_2$ (ESI-MS m/z : 439.4 $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$) which was confirmed by the LC-MS m/z 441 $[\text{M} + \text{H}]^+$. The IR spectrum showed absorption bands at ν_{max} 1718 and 1705 cm^{-1} , suggesting the presence and two carbonyl groups in **1**. This compound was previously isolated from the air-dried stems of *Drypetes molunduana*. The structure assignment appeared to be insufficiently detailed. This concern is highlighted by this study when the ^{13}C -NMR data for the compound reported by Wandji et al. (2000) were compared to that reported for compound **1**.

As shown in Table S1, there was a significant mismatching of ^{13}C -NMR shift values for drypemolundein B, with deviations of 4.1 ppm for the methine carbon (C-9) and 6.5 ppm for the nearest methine carbon (C-10). Consequently, the published values for drypemolundein B could not be accurate. Even though the 3 ppm gap between compounds analysed in the same solvent is considered acceptable (Garson et al. 2017), a re-evaluation of the ^{13}C -NMR shift values suggested that the signals at 31.7 and 34.2 ppm, previously assigned to C-29 and C-30, respectively, were rather associated to C-30 and C-29 (Chiozem et al. 2009; Sun et al. 2009; Sousa et al. 2012 and from this study). Furthermore, NOESY correlations corroborated these revised chemical shift assignments in compound **1**, for example key NOESY correlations were observed between H-27 (δ_{H} 1.02) and methine at δ_{H} 1.41 and not 2.38 (H-8) as previously ascribed. However, no correlation was reportedly observed with H-24, H-25 and H-26 from H-28 and H-30. Therefore, it was speculated that D and E-rings of compound **1** adopted boat–boat conformation due to the lack of correlations between H-28 and H-30 (Figure S1), confirming the difference of stereochemistry of C-17 and other analogues (Chiozem et al. 2009; Sun et al. 2009; Sousa et al. 2012). These additional data have not been reported previously in the literature. We determined the structure of compound **1** to be friedelane-3,11-dione by comparing the NMR data to those from Wandji et al. (2000), so that the assignments of this compound were partially revised (Table S1).

2.2. Characterisation of compound 2

Compound **2** was isolated as a yellow amorphous powder from $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2/\text{MeOH}$ mixture, m.p. 289–291 °C. Its molecular formula was deduced to be $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{20}\text{O}_{11}$ (ESI-MS m/z : 567.2 $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$). The IR spectrum showed absorption bands ν_{max} at 3100, 1653, 1601, 1164 and 1028 cm^{-1} , compatible with the presence of hydroxyl group, conjugated carbonyl, aromatic ring, C–O–C stretching vibration and C–O–H vibration, respectively. The ^1H -NMR spectrum of **2** exhibited two aromatic proton signals displaying an AB system at δ_{H} 6.16 (d, $J = 2.0$ Hz, H-6) and 6.48 (d, $J = 2.0$ Hz, H-8), and also two singlet aromatic proton signals (typical pattern of a 1,2,4,5-tetrasubstituted benzene) at δ_{H} 6.82 (s, H-3') and δ_{H} 7.79 (s, H-6'). A flavone-type proton was observed at δ_{H} 7.14 (s, H-3) for this sub-structure, suggesting the presence of an isoetin moiety in this compound. Meanwhile, an AA'BB' system was noticeable based on signals at δ_{H} 7.96 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, H-2'''/6''') and 6.90 (d, $J = 8.6$ Hz, H-3'''/5'''); another AB system was deduced from aromatic proton signals at δ_{H} 6.33 (d, $J = 2.0$ Hz, H-6'') and δ_{H} 6.53 (d, $J = 2.0$ Hz,

H-8'') when a supplementary flavone proton at δ_{H} 6.87 (s, H-3) was observed (Table S2). We noted also the presence of one methoxy signal at δ_{H} 3.78 (3H, s, OCH₃). The ¹³C-NMR and DEPT 135 spectra showed 29 signals, consisting of 1 methoxy at δ_{C} 56.6, 10 methines including two carbon signals at δ_{C} 103.3 and δ_{C} 108.0, 18 quaternary carbons including two carbonyl groups at δ_{C} 182.2 and 182.1. The HMBC spectrum exhibited correlations between proton H-3' (δ_{H} 6.82) and carbon atoms C-1' (δ_{C} 109.5), C-2' (δ_{C} 155.0), C-4' (δ_{C} 157.3) and C-5' (δ_{C} 133.4); another remarkable correlation was observed between the methoxy group δ_{H} 3.78 (s, OCH_{3-4'}) and upfielded carbon at δ_{H} 157.3 (C-4'). Else, referring to the position of the methoxy group, the analysis of NOESY spectrum indicates correlation between that group and the proton at δ_{H} 6.82 (s, H-3'), emphasising a close relationship of this B-ring with the one of ochnaflavone (Okigawa et al. 1973); moreover, compound **2**'s B-ring bears a supplementary hydroxyl group which induced the upfield field of carbon signals at δ_{C} 102.1 (C-3') and δ_{C} 109.5 (C-1'). In addition, HMBC correlations between H-3 (δ_{H} 7.14) and carbon atoms C-1' (δ_{C} 109.5), C-2 (δ_{C} 182.2) and C-4a (δ_{C} 104.7) are in accordance with the presence of a substituted apigenin with benzenetriol ring, i.e. isoetin (Figure S2). The other partial unit of compound **2** was determined using HMBC spectrum; supplement analysis enables correlations between: H-2''' (δ_{H} 7.96) and C-1''' (δ_{C} 122.6), C-3''' (δ_{C} 116.2), C-4''' (δ_{C} 157.6) and C-2'' (δ_{C} 164.4), then H-3'' (δ_{H} 6.87) with C-1''' (δ_{C} 122.6), C-4'' (δ_{C} 182.1) and C-4a'' (δ_{C} 103.5) (Table S2), confirming its nature as an apigenin moiety. The two flavonoid units could therefore be connected after analysis of the NOESY spectrum (Figure S2). The cross-peaks observed between H-3''' (δ_{H} 6.90) and OCH₃ (δ_{H} 3.78) as already mentioned and H-6' (δ_{H} 7.79) and H-5''' (δ_{H} 6.90) enabled to locate the C_{5'}-O-C_{4'''} bond between isoetin and apigenin units, respectively. Additional data from the IR spectrum at ν_{max} 1028 and 1010 cm⁻¹ also confirmed the presence of a C-O-C bond in this molecule. Consequently, the structure of **2** was concluded to be 2'-hydroxy-4'-methoxyochnaflavone named triclisinone.

2.3. Evaluation of antimycobacterial activity

From the antimycobacterial test results (Table S3), it appears that all the tested compounds exhibited good antitubercular activity with a Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) ranging from 3.90 to 62.5 µg/mL (Table S3). According to Cantrell et al. (2001), isolated compounds that exhibit a MIC of 64 µg/mL or lower are considered promising. For crude extracts, the MIC should be equal to or lower than 125 µg/mL (Gu et al. 2004). Among the isolated metabolites, compounds **1** and **8** were the most potent antitubercular agents possessing the MIC values of 3.90 and 7.81 µg/mL, respectively, more than the standard drug, Rifampicin (MIC value of 0.976 µg/mL) (Table S3). The methanol extract of *T. gillettii* showed poor inhibitory activity against *M. tuberculosis*, exhibiting a MIC and MBC of 1250 and 5000 µg/mL, respectively (Table S3), suggesting that there are other components within the extract which might have antimycobacterial effect. In addition, mycobacteria have a lipid-rich hydrophobic cell wall and are often susceptible to less polar compounds (Pauli et al. 2005). Flavonoids, bisbenzylisoquinoline, alkaloids, steroids and triterpenoids showed promising activity or can act as template for new antitubercular natural products (Okunade et al. 2004; Copp and Norrie Pearce 2007; Sureram et al. 2012; Erickson et al. 2014). For triterpenoids, the presence of polar substituents showed a decreased inhibitory potency for antimycobacterial effect; this is exemplified in compound **1** (MIC = 3.90 µg/mL, the least polar isolated compound tested) corroborating on the one hand Pauli's assertion and on another hand previous report

on antitubercular triterpenes (Jiménez-Alleranes et al. 2007; Bamuamba et al. 2008) and/or other non-polar compounds which demonstrated higher lipophilicity (Lirio et al. 2014). For significant antitubercular activity concerning the flavonoid classes, this can be explained by the presence of polyhydroxyl substitutions which might produce remarkable improvements in antitubercular activity (Myricetin, **8**) (MIC = 7.81 µg/mL), whereas the presence of methyl exemplified by 2'-hydroxy-4'-methoxyochonaflavone (**2**) (MIC = 62.5 µg/mL) or glycosidic residues in these substitution patterns may led to decreased activity against the test organism (compound **2** was 8 times less active than **8**). The antimycobacterial activity detected for **1**, **5**, **6**, **8** and **9** is in agreement to that previously reported (Erickson et al. 2014; Ebeh Messanga et al. 2017). According to Peterson and Shanholtzer (1992), bacteriostatic activity has been defined as a ratio of MBC to MIC of > 4. Thus, all tested compounds exhibited bactericidal activity.

2.4. Chemotaxonomy

To our knowledge, compound **1** is reported for the first time from *Triclisia* genus and it suggests that the genus can be considered as a potential source of triterpenes. Nevertheless, some triterpenoids have already been isolated within the Menispermaceae family, especially from *Tinospora crispa* (Kongkathip et al. 2002). This latter species is also a provider of flavonoids (Kalsom and Noor 1995) as well as *Cissampelos capensis* (Menispermaceae) (Babajide et al. 2015) which contains an analogue of quercetin (**8**), found in the present study from the *Triclisia* genus for the first time. Moreover, the appearance of compound **3** in this study is closely related to the molecular data from previous study in *Stephania abyssinica* (Menispermaceae) (Gautam et al. 2005). Even though some biflavonoids have already been described from *Stephania tetrandra* (Menispermaceae) (Si et al. 2001), this survey displays the first occurrence of this class of compounds within the *Triclisia* genus.

From this study, it is evident that the chemistry of *Cissampelos* and *Stephania* is more similar to *Triclisia* genus regarding the structures of compounds.

3. Experimental section (also in supplemental data)

3.1. Plant material

The leaves of *T. gillettii* were collected at Eséka (Koumoul) near Yaoundé in the Centre Region of Cameroon in March 2014 and identified by the botanist Mr Victor Nana. A voucher specimen (N° 64296 HCN) was deposited at the National Herbarium in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

3.2. Friedelan-3, 11-dione (**1**) C₃₀H₄₈O₂

White amorphous powder; m.p 281–283°; TLC R_f : 0.85 (CH₂Cl₂/MeOH; 25/1); $[\alpha]_D^{20} = -8.018^\circ$ ($c = 0.05$, CDCl₃); IR (KBr) cm⁻¹: 2954, 2860, 1718, 1705, 1460, 1068; ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectral data (500, 125 MHz, CDCl₃), see Table S1; ESI-MS m/z : 439.4 [M-H]⁻; LC-MS m/z 441 [M + H]⁺ (calcd for C₃₀H₄₈O₂, 439.38; 441, respectively).

3.3. 2'-hydroxy-4'-methoxyochnaflavone (2) $C_{31}H_{20}O_{11}$

Yellow amorphous powder; m.p 289–291°; TLC R_f : 0.38 ($CH_2Cl_2/MeOH$; 10/1); IR (KBr) cm^{-1} : 3100, 2890, 1653, 1601, 1164, 1028, 1010; 1H - and ^{13}C -NMR spectral data (500, 125 MHz, $DMSO-d_6$), see Table S2; ESI-MS m/z : 567.2 $[M-H]^-$ (calcd for $C_{31}H_{20}O_{11}$, 567.18).

4. Conclusion

The results from this study suggest that the bioactive principles present in the extract belong to triterpen and flavonoid skeletons such as friedelane 3,11-dione (**1**) and myricetin (**8**) and appear to be useful templates for the development of new anti-tuberculosis drugs.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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