

The Brandberg revisited

Bertil Nordenstam

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

- Brenan, J. P. M.; 1981: The genus *Amaranthus* in Southern Africa. — Journ. S. Afr. Bot. 47: 451–492.
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- Nordenstam, B.; 1974: The flora of Brandberg. — Dinteria 11: 1–67.