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Bioactive Seco-Lanostane-Type Triterpenoids from the Root of *Leplaeamayombensis*

Lazare S. Sidjui,^{†,‡} Kenneth O. Eyong,^{*,‡,§} Kenneth G. Hull,[§] Gabriel N. Folefoc,[‡] Valerie M. Leddet,[⊥] Gaëtan Herbette,^{||} Evelyne Ollivier,[⊥] Joseph Taube,[∇] Kevin Klausmeyer,[§] and Daniel Romo[§]

[†]Institute of Medical Research and Medicinal Plant Studies P.O. Box 6163 Yaoundé, Cameroon

[‡]Department of Organic Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Yaounde I, P.O. Box 812, Yaoundé, Cameroon

[§]Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry & The CPRIT Synthesis and Drug-Lead Discovery Laboratory, Baylor University, Waco Texas 76798 USA

[⊥]Laboratory of Pharmacognosy and Ethnopharmacology, UMR-MD3, Faculty of Pharmacy, Aix Marseille University, 27 Blvd Jean Moulin, CS 30064, 13385, Marseille cedex 5, France

^{||}Spectropole, FR1739, Aix-Marseille University, Campus de St Jérôme-service 511, 13397 Marseille, cedex 20, France

[∇]Department of Biology, Institute for Biomedical Sciences, Baylor University, Waco Texas 76798 USA

ABSTRACT: Fractionation of the ethyl acetate-soluble extract of the root of *Leplaeamayombensis* afforded two new 3,4-seco-lanostane-type triterpenoids, leplaeric acids A and B (**1**, **2**), a new lanostane-type triterpenoid leplaeric acid C (**3**), and six known natural products **5-10**. Derivatization of the main constituent **1**, afforded the dimethyl ester **4**, the monoamide **11**, and diamide **12** for SAR studies. The structures of these compounds were established through spectroscopic methods and a single crystal X-ray diffraction analysis was used to confirm the relative configuration of compound **1**. These lanostane derivatives are unique since they are the first C-21 oxygenated lanostanes isolated from plant sources. Preliminary biological assays against the MDA MB 231 breast cancer cell line showed that compounds **1**, **2**, **4**, and **11** have modest cytotoxic activity. Compound **2** was the most active with an IC_{50} of $55\mu M$. From these results, the amides (**11**, **12**) of compound **1** were less active compared to the esters (**2**, **4**).

Leplaeais a genus which was originally placed under the genus *Guarea* as a species. However, recent morphological studies show that the group is distinct from the South-American members of *Guarea* and deserves generic status. Therefore, the genus *Leplaea* has been reinstated to accommodate five of the species formerly placed in *Guarea*. These species are: *Leplaealaurentii* (De Wild.) E. J. M. Koenen & J.J. de Wilde, *Leplaeathompsonii* (Sprague & Hutch.) E. J. M. Koenen & J.J. de Wilde, *Leplaeaadenopunctata* E. J. M. Koenen & J.J. de Wilde, *Leplaeacedrata* (A. Chev.) E. J. M. Koenen & J.J. de Wilde, and *Leplaeamayombensis* (Pellegr.) Staner.¹

Leplaeamayombensis is distributed in Gabon, West Cameroon, Congo, D.R. Congo (Zaire) and was first identified in 2010.² This plant is used in African folk medicine for the treatment of cancer and microbial infections. Phytochemical studies on this species reveal that triterpenoids are its main constituents.³

Triterpenoids are the C-30 class of natural products derived from squalene. The biosynthetic origin of most triterpenoids lies in cascade cyclizations and rearrangements of the acyclic precursors squalene (S) and 2,3-oxidosqualene (OS), leading to the tetra- and pentacyclic triterpenoid skeletons.^{4,5,6,7} Lanostanes are tetracyclic triterpenoids and are the principal constituents in some genera such as the genus *Kadsura* Juss., e.g. *K. coccinea* (Lem.) A.C. Sm. and genus *Abies* L. such as *A. balsamea* (L.) Mill. Several of these lanostane triterpenoids have potential anti-HIV, anticancer, and cholesterol biosynthesis inhibitory activities.⁸ For example, schisanlactone E and changnanic acid isolated from *K. longipedunculata* showed antiproliferative effects against murine leukemia P388 cells,⁹ and ananosic acids B and C isolated from *K. ananosma* exhibited cytotoxicity against human CCRF-CEM cells and HeLa cells.¹⁰

In the present study, the isolation and structure elucidation of three new lanostane-type

triterpenoids (**1-3**, Figure 1) from the air dried roots of *L. mayombensis* are reported. Derivatives, **4**, **11**, and **12** were prepared by esterification and amidation of compound **1** for SAR studies. Compounds **1**, **2**, **4**, and **11** possess modest cytotoxicity against MDA MB 231 breast cancer cell lines.

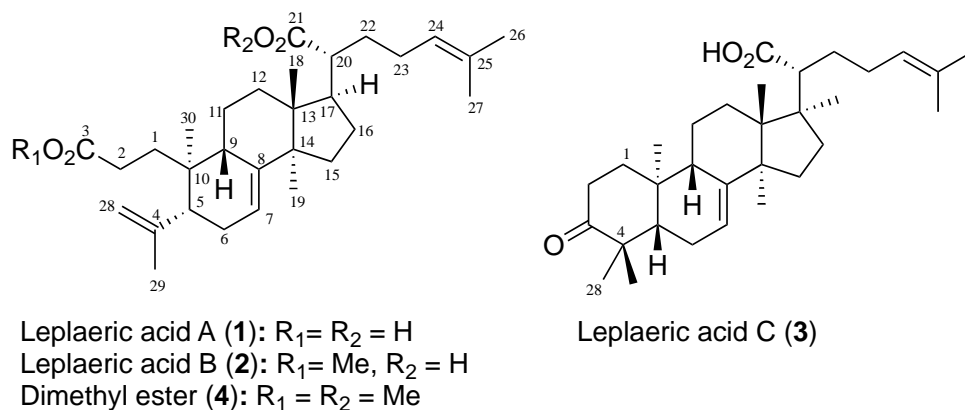


Figure 1. Lanostane-type triterpenoids from *L. mayombensis*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The CH_2Cl_2 -MeOH (1:1) extract of the air-dried roots of *L. mayombensis* was partitioned with hexanes, EtOAc, and *n*-BuOH successively. Three new lanostane-type triterpenoids **1-3** and six known compounds, **5-10** (Figure 4) were obtained from the EtOAc fraction through a series of column chromatographic separations. Esterification and amidation of compound **1** afforded its dimethyl ester **4**, monoamide **11**, and diamide **12** for structure-activity relationship (SAR) studies (Scheme 1).

Compound **1** was obtained as a white powder from silica gel column chromatography eluting with 30% hexanes-EtOAc. It is soluble in CH_2Cl_2 , stains on TLC with iodine or H_2SO_4 , melts at $160^\circ C$ and has an $[\alpha]_D^{20} - 3.4$ (c 2.0, $CHCl_3$). Its molecular formula was determined as $C_{30}H_{46}O_4$

on the basis of HRESIMS(m/z 471.3468 $[M+H]^+$) indicating eight indices of hydrogen deficiency. The IR spectrum indicated the presence of a carboxylic acid group (1702 cm^{-1}). The ^1H NMR(600 MHz, CDCl_3) spectrum shows six methyl groups at δ_{H} 1.80 (3H, m), 1.68 (3H, d, $J = 1.3\text{ Hz}$), 1.61 (3H, d, $J = 1.3\text{ Hz}$), 1.01 (3H, s), 0.92 (3H, s), and 0.88 (3H, s). The ^{13}C NMR(150MHz, CDCl_3) spectrum exhibited 30 carbon signals that were sorted by a DEPT experiment as six methyl(δ_{C} 27.0, 25.7, 21.7, 21.4, 17.7, 16.2), nine methylene (δ_{C} 33.5, 32.3, 30.5, 30.2, 30.0, 27.8, 27.6, 26.0, 18.1), one terminal double bond ($=\text{CH}_2$, δ_{C} 114.1), six methine carbons (four $-\text{CH}$ (δ_{C} 50.4, 50.0, 48.8, 40.9) and two $=\text{CH}$ (δ_{C} 123.4, 118.0)), two carbonyls(δ_{C} 183.4, 181.3), three fully substituted olefinic carbons (δ_{C} 147.5, 145.7, 123.4), and three quaternary carbons (δ_{C} 51.4, 43.3, 36.4). On the basis of the above data compound **1** was either a 3,4-seco-lanostane or a lupeol-type triterpenoid since they are the only triterpenoids in these classes with terminal olefinic functionalities.¹¹

The lupeol-type structure was however discarded based on the indices of hydrogen deficiency. The ^1H and ^{13}C NMR data were assigned using ^1H - ^1H COSY, HSQC, HSQC-TOCSY, HMBC, and NOESY spectra (Figure S1-S17, Supporting Information). Typical in the HMBC spectrum are correlations between H-6 (δ 2.23, 2.02), H-7 (5.26), H₂-28(4.83), H₃-29 (1.80) with C-5(δ 50.0), and the deshielded methyl protons H₃-29 (δ 1.80) with C-5(δ 50.0), C-4(147.5), and C-28(114.1) which implied a $\Delta^{4(28)}$ terminal double bond (Figure 2). Also observed are HMBC correlations between H-24 (δ 5.12) with Me-26 (δ 25.7) and Me-27(17.7) for a 2-methylprop-1-enyl unit. HMBC correlations of the olefinic H-7 (δ 5.26) with C-9 (δ 40.9) and C-14 (51.4) indicate a $\Delta^{7(8)}$ double bond (Figure 1). COSY correlations were observed between H-7(δ 5.26) and H₂-6 (2.25, 2.20), H-24 (δ 5.12) and H₂-23(2.09, 1.99), and NOESY correlations

between H-24 (δ 5.12) and Me-26 (δ 1.68) and Me-27 (1.61) as well as H₂-28 (δ 4.83) with Me-29 (δ 1.80). Collectively, the NMR data supported the assigned structure of compound **1** and the connectivity and relative configuration were unambiguously confirmed using single crystal X-ray diffraction¹² (Figure 2). Compound **1** was thus defined as (5 α , 9 β , 10 α , 13 β , 14 α , 17 α , 20 α)-3,4-secolanostan-4(28),7,24-triene-3,21-dioic acid, a new seco-lanostane-type triterpenoid and named, leplaeric acid A. In an attempt to unambiguously assign the absolute configuration of leplaeric acid (**1**) by X-ray analysis, *p*-bromobenzamides **11** and **12** possessing a heavy atom were prepared (Scheme 1). However, none of the crystals obtained of these derivatives were of X-ray quality.

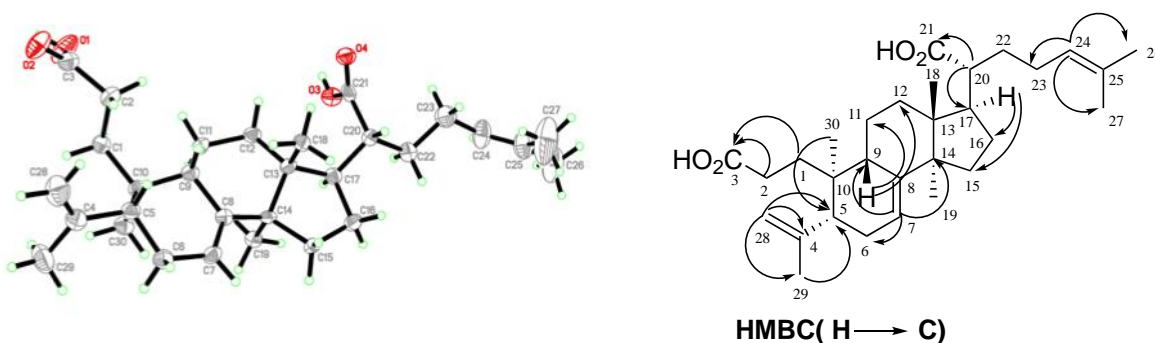


Figure 2. ORTEP drawing (left) and main HMBC correlations of **1** (right).

Compound **2** was obtained as a white powder after silica gel column chromatography eluting with 88% hexanes-EtOAc. It is soluble in CH₂Cl₂, stains on TLC with iodine or H₂SO₄ and melts at 174°C. Its molecular formula was determined as C₃₁H₄₈O₄ on the basis of HRESIMS (m/z 485.3627 [M+H]⁺) indicating eight indices of hydrogen deficiency. The IR spectrum of compound **2** showed the presence of a carboxylic acid (1700 cm⁻¹) and an ester (1739 cm⁻¹) group. The ¹H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl₃) and ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃) spectra were similar to compound **1** except for the presence of a three-proton singlet at δ_{H} 3.60 attributed to an

ester group. The HMBC spectrum shows correlations between H₂-2 protons (δ 2.39, td, $J=6.0, 12.0$ Hz and 2.19) and MeO-31 at δ 51.5 indicating that the methoxy group is at C-3. The shielding of H₂-2 as compared to compound **1** (δ 2.62 and 2.42) indicates a difference in its chemical environment. The ¹³C NMR spectrum of compound **2** indicates a 3-methoxycarbonyl (δ 174.4) as compared to a 3-hydroxycarbonyl function (δ 181.3) in compound **1**. On the basis of these 1D and 2D spectroscopic values (Table 1), the structure of compound **2**, leplaeric acid B, was assigned as the 3-methyl ester of leplaeric acid A (Figure 1).

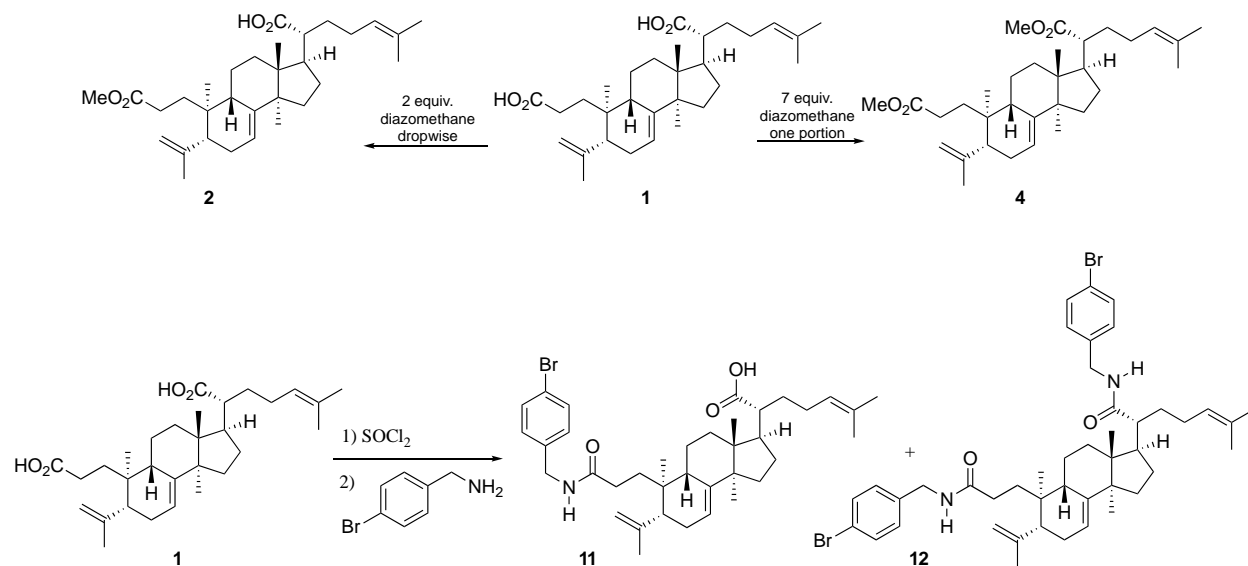
Compound **3** was obtained as a white powder from a silica gel column chromatography eluting with 82% hexanes-EtOAc. Its IR spectrum indicated the presence of two carbonyl groups (1704 and 1654 cm⁻¹) and it has a melting point range of 274-276°C. The HRESIMS showed (m/z 455.3427 [M+H]⁺) and a molecular formula of C₃₀H₄₆O₃. It is soluble in CH₂Cl₂ and stains on TLC with iodine or H₂SO₄. The ¹H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl₃) spectrum of compound **3** was similar to compound **1** except for the absence of the terminal double bond protons H₂-28 (δ _H 4.83), the vinylic Me-29 (1.80), and the presence of two methyl groups Me-28 (δ _H 1.11, s) and Me-29 (1.04, s) respectively. Compound **3** also exhibited differences from compound **1** in the ¹³C NMR spectrum with the presence of a carbonyl group (δ _C 216.9) indicative of a ketone and the absence of the terminal olefinic moiety $\Delta^{4(28)}$ (δ _C 147.5, 114.1). In the HMBC spectrum, correlations of H₂-2 (δ 2.76, 2.32), H₂-1 (1.97 and 1.45) with the C-3 (δ 216.9) carbonyl group were observed. Additional HMBC correlations were also observed between the methyl protons H₃-28 (δ 1.11) and H₃-29 (1.04) with C-3 (δ 216.9), confirming the position of the carbonyl group of leplaeric acid C (Figures 1 and 3). It is likely that leplaeric acids A (**1**) and C (**3**) are derived biosynthetically from the same lanosterol precursor. Oxidation of the C-3 hydroxy group of the lanosterol would give rise to the C-3 carbonyl in ketone **3**, while an

Table 1. ¹H and ¹³C NMR Data (600 and 150 MHz) of Compounds 1-4, 11-12 (δ_H, CDCl₃, J in Hz)

	1		2		3		4		11	12
	¹ H	¹³ C	¹ H	¹³ C	¹ H	¹³ C	¹ H	¹³ C	¹ H	¹ H
1	2.11(1H, m) 1.33(1H,m)	27.8	2.00(1H, m) 1.33 (1H,m)	27.3	1.97(1H, m) 1.45(1H, m)	38.7	2.00(1H, m) 1.33(1H,m)	26.1	2.11(1H, m) 1.33(1H,m)	2.11(1H, m) 1.33(1H,m)
2	2.62 (1H, m) 2.42(1,H, m)	27.6	2.39(1H,td, J=12.0, 6.0Hz) 2.25(1H, m)	28.1	2.76(1H, m) 2.32(1H, m)	35.0	2.37 (1H, m) 2.11(1,H, m)	27.1	2.48 (1H, m) 2.42(1,H, m)	2.48 (1H, m) 2.42(1,H, m)
3		181.3		174.4		216.9		174.0		
4		147.5		147.3		35.2		147.3		
5	2.00(1H, m)	50.0	2.09 (1H, m)	49.9	1.72 (1H, t, J=6Hz)	52.5	2.00 (1H, m)	49.9	2.00(1H, m)	2.00(1H, m)
6	2.25(1H, m) 2.02 (1H, m)	30.2	2.23(1H, m) 2.05(1H, m)	30.2	2.10(2H, m)	24.6	2.12(1H, m) 1.99(1H, m)	30.2	2.25(1H, m) 2.02 (1H, m)	2.25(1H, m) 2.02 (1H, m)
7	5.26(1H, m)	117.9	5.28 (1H, m)	118.3	5.31 (1H, m)	118.4	5.18(1H,t, J=6Hz)	118.2	5.26(1H, m)	5.26(1H, m)
8		145.7		145.8		145.6		145.9		
9	2.60(1H, m)	40.9	2.48(1H, m)	40.6	2.04 (1H, t, J=6Hz)	50.0	2.45(1H,m)	40.6	2.48(1H, m)	2.48(1H, m)
10		43.3		43.3		43.5		43.1		
11	1.55(1H, m) 1.35(1H, m)	18.1	1.55(1H, m) 1.45(1H, m)	18.1	1.53 (2H, m)	18.0	1.53 (2H,m)	17.9	1.55(1H, m) 1.35(1H, m)	1.55(1H, m) 1.35(1H, m)
12	1.52(2H, m)	33.5	1.55(2H, m)	33.8	1.55(2H, m)	33.7	1.57(2H,m)	33.8	1.52(2H, m)	1.52(2H, m)
13		36.4		36.9		35.0		36.8		
14		51.4		51.3		51.1		51.6		
15	1.50(2H, m)	32.3	1.56(2H, m)	32.2	1.56(2H, m)	32.5	1.57 (2H,m)	32.4	1.50(2H, m)	1.50(2H, m)
16	1.45 (2H, m)	30.5	1.75(1H, m) 1.55(1H, m)	30.0	1.75(1H, m) 1.45(1H, m)	30.2	1.46 (2H,m)	30.1	1.45 (2H, m)	1.45 (2H, m)
17	2.27(1H, m)	48.8	2.33 (1H,td,J=12.0, 6.0Hz)	47.3	2.29 (1H, m)	48.3	2.25 (1H,td, J=6.0;12.0Hz)	47.3	2.27(1H, m)	2.27(1H, m)
18	0.88(3H, s)	16.2	0.84(3H, s)	15.8	0.95(3H, s)	12.9	0.75(3H,s)	15.9	0.88(3H, s)	0.88(3H, s)
19	1.01 (3H, s)	27.0	1.01(3H, s)	27.4	1.01(3H, s)	27.5	0.91(3H,s)	27.4	1.01 (3H, s)	1.01 (3H, s)
20	2.48(1H, m)	50.4	2.44(1H, m)	49.3	2.32 (1H, m)	47.3	2.35(1H, m)	49.4	2.41(1H, m)	2.41(1H, m)
21		183.4		182.4		181.4		176.5		
22	1.60(2H, m)	32.0	1.62(2H, m)	31.9	1.94 (1H, m) 1.34 (1H, m)	27.3	1.57(1H, m) 1.23(1H,m)	31.8	1.60(2H, m)	1.60(2H, m)
23	2.09(1H,m) 1.99(1H, m)	26.0	2.00(2H, m)	26.0	1.99(2H, m)	26.2	1.82(2H,m)	26.1	2.09(1H,m) 1.99(1H, m)	2.09(1H,m) 1.99(1H, m)
24	5.12 (1H, m)	123.4	5.12 (1H, m)	123.5	5.10 (1H, m)	123.7	5.01(1H, t)	123.9	5.07 (1H, m)	5.07 (1H, m)
25		132.4		132.3		132.5		132.1		
26	1.68(3H, d, J=1.3Hz)	25.7	1.70(3H, d, J=1.3Hz)	25.7	1.68(3H, s)	25.8	1.50(3H,s)	25.7	1.68(3H, s)	1.68(3H, s)
27	1.61(3H, d, J=1.3Hz)	17.7	1.60(3H, d, J=1.3Hz)	17.6	1.58 (3H, s)	17.8	1.61(3H,s)	17.6	1.61(3H, s)	1.61(3H, s)
28	4.83(2H, m)	114.1	4.86 (1H, m) 4.81 (1H, d, J=2.1Hz)	113.9	1.11 (3H, s)	21.7	4.76 (1H,d, J=6Hz) 4.72 (1H,d, J=6Hz)	113.7	4.83(2H, d, J=12.0 Hz)	4.83(2H, d, J=12.0 Hz)
29	1.80 (3H, m)	21.7	1.80 (3H, m)	22.5	1.04 (3H, s)	24.7	1.71(3H,s)	22.3	1.80 (3H, m)	1.80 (3H, m)
30	0.92(3H, s)	21.4	0.95(3H, s)	21.8	0.89(3H, s)	21.8	0.82(3H, s)	21.9	0.92(3H, s)	0.92(3H, s)
31			3.61(3H, s)	51.5			3.60(s, OMe)	51.1	7.48(2H, t, J=6Hz), 7.25(2H, d, J=12Hz), 5.71(NH, t, J=6Hz), 4.58 (1H, dd, J= 12.0 6.0Hz) 4.29 (1H, dd, J= 12.0 6.0Hz) for 4-bromobenzylamide	7.49(2H, t, J=6Hz), 7.25(2H, d, J=12Hz), 5.71(NH,t, J=6Hz), 4.58 (1H, dd, J= 12.0 6.0Hz) 4.29 (1H, dd, J=12.0 6.0Hz) for 4-bromobenzylamide
32							3.59(s, OMe)	51.1		7.49(2H, t, J=6Hz), 7.19(2H, d, J=12Hz),

										5.77(NH, t, $J=6\text{Hz}$) 4.42 (2H, d, $J=6.0\text{Hz}$) for 4- bromobenzylamide
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To obtain derivatives for structure-activity relationship (SAR) analysis, ester derivatives **2** and **4** were prepared from lepleric acid **1** using diazomethane generated in situ from 1-methyl-3-nitro-1-nitrosoguanidine (MNG) and amidation of **1** with 4-bromobenzylamine provided amide derivatives **11** and **12** (Scheme 1).



Scheme 1. Diazomethane esterification and amidation of compound **1**.

Treatment of compound **1** with 2 equivalents of diazomethane¹⁴ afforded compound **2** in a biomimetic-type transformation. When excess diazomethane (7 equiv.) was used, the dimethyl diester **4** was produced. Synthesized compound **2** was identical with the natural product by comparing their TLC R_f values and NMR spectroscopic data.

Compound **4** was purified as a white amorphous compound from a silica gel column eluting with 95% hexanes-EtOAc from the diazomethane reaction of compound **1**. Its IR spectrum shows an intense peak for an ester group at 1733 cm^{-1} . Its ^1H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl_3) and ^{13}C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl_3) spectra were similar to compound **1** except for the presence of two

methoxyproton resonances at δ 3.60(s, OMe) and 3.59(s, OMe) in the ^1H NMR spectrum and at δ 51.1(OMe), 174.0 and 176.5 (two -COOMe groups) in the ^{13}C NMR spectrum (Table 1). These results were supported by the HRESIMS (m/z 499.3782 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$) for $\text{C}_{32}\text{H}_{50}\text{O}_4$. Based on spectroscopic analysis, compound **4** was determined to be 3, 21-dimethyl-leplaeric ester. Compound **1** was treated with thionyl chloride followed by 2 equiv. of 4-bromobenzylamine in a two pot reaction to afford compounds **11** and **12** in a 1:3 ratio that was purified on a silica gel column eluting with 30% (**12**) and 45% (**11**) hexanes-EtOAc respectively.

In addition to the lanostane derivatives, five known compounds were also isolated and included: andirobin¹⁵(**5**), 1,2-dihydroandirobin¹⁵(**6**), β -sitosterol¹⁶(**7**), stigmasterol¹⁶(**8**), α -spinosterol¹⁷(**9**), and sigmoidin B¹⁸(**10**) (Figure 4).

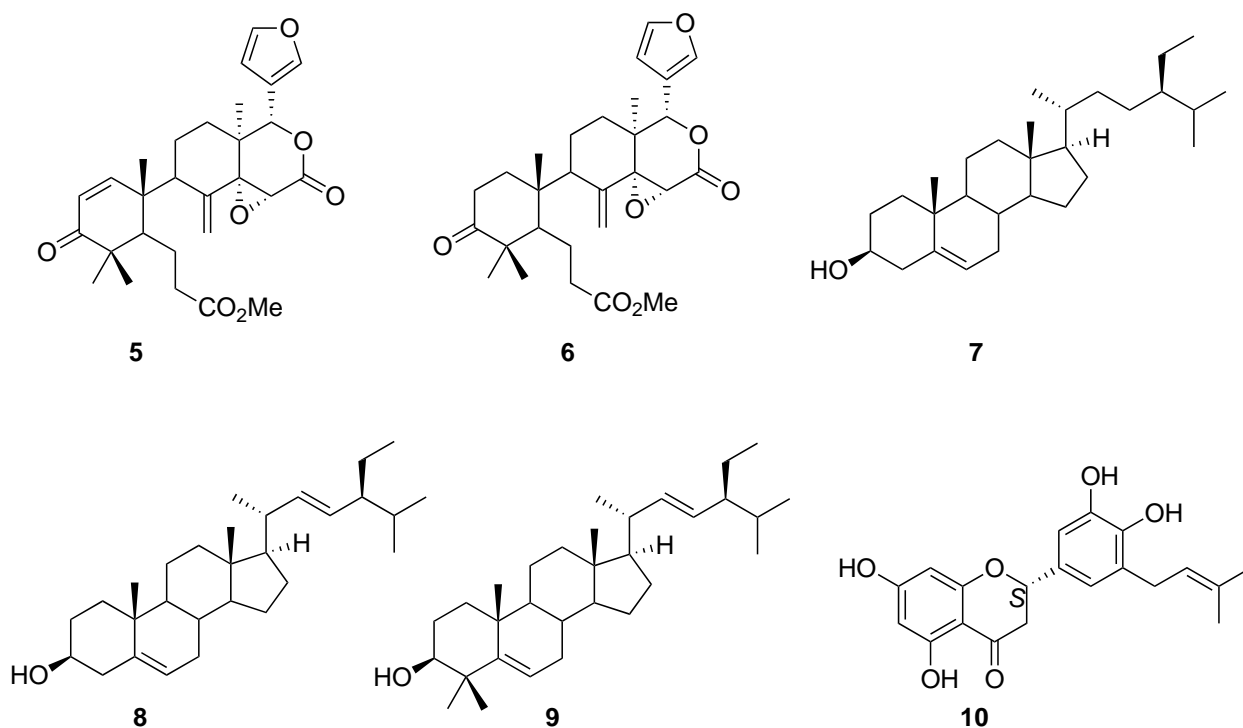


Figure 4: Known compounds from the EtOAc extract of *Leplaeamayombensis*.

To ascertain if any of the isolated compounds exhibited cytotoxic activity, the relative viability of the MDAMB231 breast cancer cell line exposed to triterpenoids at multiple concentrations was assayed. For this, MDAMB231 cells were plated in a 96 well format. The indicated compounds, dissolved in DMSO were serially diluted in culture media prior to addition to the culture. After a 3-day incubation time, relative viability was determined indirectly through the measurement of total ATP in each well using CellTiter-Glo (Promega, Figure 5). Following this assay, the IC₅₀ value was determined with 95% confidence interval (Table 2). The methyl esters **2** and **4** were more active than the diacid against the MDA MB 231 breast cancer cell line which may be due to greater cell permeability. The methyl esters **2** and **4** were equally more active than the amides **11** and **12**. Additionally, a significant loss in activity of the diamide **12** compared to diacid **1** was observed.

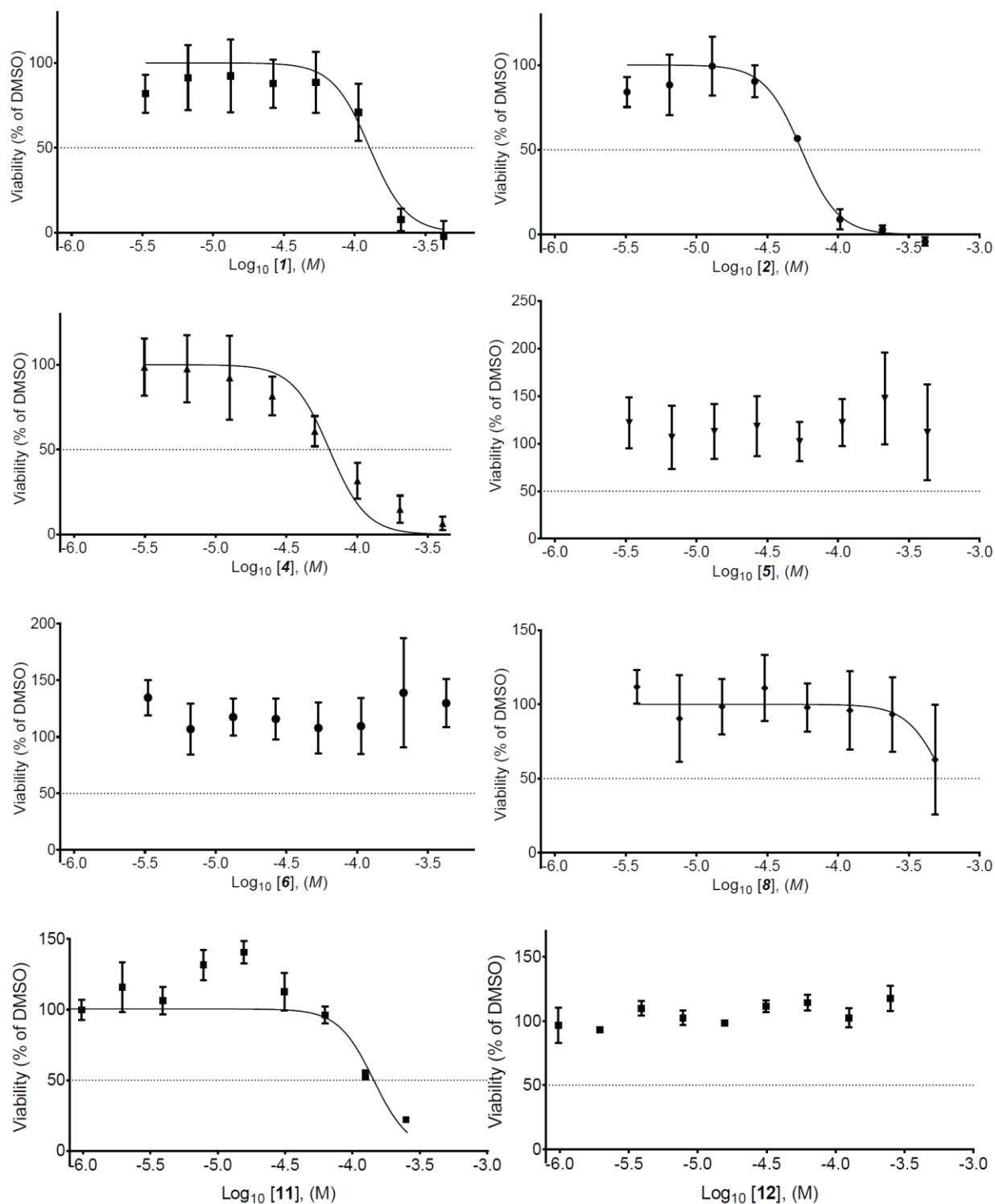


Figure 5. Triterpenoids **1**, **2** and **4** have modest cytotoxic activity against MDAMB231 breast cancer cells. MDAMB231 cells were plated at a density of 2000 cells per well and treated with the indicated compounds for 3 days followed by cell viability assay. Error bars indicate the

standard deviation of three independent measurements. The curves indicate the best fit of a non-linear curve fitting the equation, $Y=100/\{1+10^{[(X-\text{Log}IC_{50})]}\}$.

Table 2. IC₅₀ Values Calculated from Scheme 1 and Figure 4 for the Indicated Compounds Toward MDAMB231 Breast Cancer Cells after 3 Day Exposure.

	1	2	4	8	11
IC ₅₀ (μM)	127	55.0	63.5	564	140
95% Confidence Intervals (μM)	102 to 158	47.5-63.8	51.5-78.3	409-779	107-183

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

General Experimental Procedures. Melting points were measured on a MEL-TEMP^R apparatus. Optical rotations were determined using a Rudolph Autopol IV polarimeter. IR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Tensor 27 Spectrometer. 1D (¹H, ¹³C and DEPT) and 2D (¹H-¹H COSY, HSQC, HSQC-TOCSY, HMBC, TOCSY, NOESY, and ROESY) NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Ascend 600 (¹H 600 MHz and ¹³C 150 MHz) NMR spectrometer equipped with a 5 mm cryoprobe. ¹H NMR chemical shifts are reported as δ values in ppm relative to CDCl₃ (7.26 ppm), coupling constants (*J*) are reported in Hertz (Hz), and multiplicity follows convention. Unless indicated otherwise, CDCl₃ served as an internal standard (77.2 ppm) for all ¹³C spectra. The chemical shifts are quoted relative to TMS. X-ray data were recorded on a Bruker 400 Machine. HRESIMS data were acquired on a Thermo LTQ Orbitrap mass spectrometer

with ESI direct infusion and a Bruker Amazon SL for LRMS. Flash column chromatography was performed using 60Å Silica Gel (200-300 mesh).

Sample Collection. *L. mayombensis* fruits and roots were harvested in Yaoundé-Cameroon, (October, 2014) and identified by Mr. Victor Nana (Plant taxonomist) of the Cameroon National Herbarium (HNC), where voucher specimens were deposited (46220/HNC). The root was collected, cut into small pieces, dried at room temperature and powdered.

Extraction and Isolation. Powdered roots (1.5 kilograms) were extracted by maceration in MeOH:CH₂Cl₂(1:1 v/v) at room temperature. The filtrates were concentrated on a rotary evaporator under reduced pressure to yield 250 g of crude extract. The crude extract (240 g) was subjected to fractionation using hexanes, EtOAc and *n*-BuOH. The EtOAc rich fraction (70 g) was subjected to silica gel 60 (0.063 – 0.200 mm) column chromatography using hexanes, hexanes-EtOAc gradient and EtOAc. Fractions (150) of 150 mL each were collected and concentrated under vacuum. Eight compounds namely, leplaeric acid A (**1**, 200mg), leplaeric acid B(**2**, 30 mg), leplaeric acid C (**3**, 15 mg), andirobin (**5**, 20mg), 1,2-dihydroandirobin (**6**, 15mg), β -sitosterol (**7**, 13 mg), stigmasterol (**8**, 20mg), and α -spinosterol (**9**, 15 mg), were obtained.

Preparation of Compound 4. To a stirred solution of 50% KOH (10 mL) under diethyl ether (5.0 mL) at 0 °C, MNG (11.25 mg, 0.08mmol) was added gently. The resulting yellow coloured organic layer was separated, dried over KOH pellets, and added to compound **1** (18 mg, 0.04mmol) in Et₂O (2 mL), the reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. Column chromatographic purification of the crude material over silica gel using 5% EtOAc in hexanes as solvent afforded pure compound **4** (70% yield).

Preparation of Compound 2. To a stirred solution of 50% KOH (1 mL), MNG (3.75 mg, 0.021 mmol) in Et₂O (1 mL) at 0 °C was added gently. The organic layer was separated and

added to compound **1** (6mg, 0.0128mmol). Silica gel column chromatography eluting with 12% EtOAc in hexanes afforded compound **2** (60% yield).

Biological Screening. MDAMB231 cells were cultured in Dulbecco's modified Eagle medium (Corning), supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (Gibco) and antibiotics (Lonza). For the determination of cytotoxicity, cells were plated in 96-well plates (Nest Scientific) at a density of 2000 cells per well in 100 μ L of media per well. On the following day, the media was aspirated, and 100 μ L of media in which a serial dilution of DMSO-dissolved compound (or DMSO as a control) was added to wells in triplicate. Three days later, the relative number of metabolically active cells was determined by addition of the CellTiter-Glo reagent (Promega) and measurement of chemiluminescence according to the manufacturer's protocol using a Fluoroskan Ascent FL (Thermo Scientific). To calculate the percent viability, the signal from background wells (media only) was subtracted from each well and then the remaining chemiluminescence value was normalized to the signal from wells with the equivalent amounts of DMSO. Graphing was done using GraphPad Prism 6 (GraphPad Software). IC₅₀ values were calculated by fitting a non-linear curve using the "log-inhibitor vs normalized response" function given by the equation $Y=100/\{1+10^{[(X-\text{LogIC}_{50})]}\}$.

Leplaeric acid A(**1**): White micro-crystalline powder obtained from 70% hexanes-EtOAc. Soluble in CH₂Cl₂, mp 160°C, IR ν_{max} 2953, 1702, 1449 cm⁻¹, and has an $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{20}$ -3.4 (*c* 2.0, CHCl₃). ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1; HRESI (*m/z* 471.3468 [M+H]⁺) for C₃₀H₄₆O₄.

Leplaeric acid B(**2**): white micro-crystalline powder from 88% hexanes-AcOEt. Soluble in CH₂Cl₂, mp 174°C, IR ν_{max} 1700, 1739 cm⁻¹, and has an $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{20}$ +21.7 (*c* 0.35, CHCl₃). ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1; HRESIMS (*m/z* 485.3627 [M+H]⁺) for C₃₁H₄₈O₄.

Leplaeric acid C(3). White micro-crystalline powder from 82% hexanes-EtOAc. Soluble in CH₂Cl₂, mp 274-276°C. IR ν_{\max} 3382, 3300-2600, 1704, 1654 cm⁻¹, and has an $[\alpha]_{\text{D}}^{20}$ -40.0 (c 0.20, CHCl₃). ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1; HRESIMS (*m/z* 455.3427 [M+H]⁺) for C₃₀H₄₆O₃.

Leplaeric acid-3,21-dimethyl ester (4). IR ν_{\max} 1733 cm⁻¹. ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1; HRESIMS (*m/z* 499.3782 [M+H]⁺) for C₃₂H₅₀O₄.

X-ray Crystallographic Analysis. White crystals of compound **1** were obtained from CHCl₃-hexanes. Data for complex **1** were collected at 150 K on a Bruker D8 Quest with I μ S microfocus source using Mo K α radiation (λ = 0.71073 Å). The structure was solved by direct methods and refined by full-matrix least-squares refinement on F² after multiscan absorption correction of the data using SADABS.^{19,20} Data was processed using the Bruker AXS SHELXTL software, version 6.14.²¹ Crystallographic data of **1**: C₃₀H₄₆O₄ (M = 470.67); Monoclinic crystal (0.336 x 0.032 x 0.018 mm); space group P2₁; unit cell dimensions a = 16.1809(12) Å, b = 6.7481(4) Å, c = 16.4245(13) Å, β = 116.917(3)°, V = 1599.1(2) Å³; Z = 2; ρ_{calcd} = 0.977 Mg/m³; μ = 0.063 mm⁻¹; 16 926 reflections measured (2.520° ≤ θ ≤ 25.636°), 5983 unique (Rint = 0.0810), which were used for all calculations; the final refinement produced R1 = 0.0607 (>2 σ (I)) and wR2 = 0.1249 (all data); and Flack parameter = -0.3(10), which does not allow for absolute stereostructure determination by X-ray. All non-hydrogen atoms were refined anisotropically, all hydrogen atoms attached to carbon were placed in calculated positions and the carboxylate hydrogens were located in the difference map and their positions refined. A disordered water molecule was removed from the structure (8 e-) using the SQUEEZE procedure implemented in PLATON.²² The crystallographic data of **1** were deposited at the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre under deposition number CCDC 1491114. Copies

of the crystallographic data can be obtained for free from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK e-mail: deposit@ccdc.cam.ac.uk or fax: (+44) 1223-336-033] or by www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/conts/retrieving.html

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

NMR data for lanostane-type terpenoids (**1-4**) and (**11-12**). This material is available free of charge via the internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Author

*Tel (Kenneth Eyong): +237-677-951126. E-mail: eyongkk@gmail.com

Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

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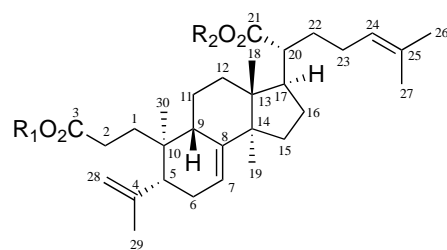
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Table of Contents/Abstract Graphic:



Leplaeric acid A (1): $R_1 = R_2 = H$
Leplaeric acid B (2): $R_1 = Me, R_2 = H$

