

CORALLISTINE, A NEW POLYNITROGEN COMPOUND FROM THE
SPONGE *Corallistes fulvodesmus* L. & L.

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Abstract: Two polynitrogen compounds 1-methyl-pteridine-2,4-dione 1b and corallistine 2 were isolated from the new-caledonian sponge *Corallistes fulvodesmus* L. & L. The structure of corallistine was determined by X-ray single crystal analysis of its 6'-isobutyloxycarbonyl derivative 3.

In the course of our search for new biologically active substances in deep water marine invertebrates, we undertook an investigation of the extracts of the new-caledonian sponge *Corallistes fulvodesmus* Levi & Levi.¹ This led us to the isolation of two polynitrogen compounds 1-methyl-pteridine-2,4-dione 1b and a new compound with a novel structure corallistine 2.

On the other hand, the basic properties of the molecule, as well as a band at 3360 cm^{-1} on the IR spectrum and a broadened singlet of two exchangeable protons at 7.36 ppm on the $^1\text{H NMR}$ spectrum (DMSO- d_6), suggested that a primary amine group was present. This was confirmed through acylation (ClCOO*i*Bu, pyridine, rt, 1 h) giving rise to a monoacyl derivative **3** (MS : M^+ 351) showing one exchangeable proton as a singlet at 11.70 ppm in the $^1\text{H NMR}$ spectrum (DMSO- d_6).

All other spectral data of **2** and **3** fitted with a heterocyclic compound possibly a pteridine derivative close to the pteridine dione **1b** previously isolated, but did not prove the connectivity of the different C and N atoms. An X-ray crystal structure determination was therefore undertaken.

As suitable crystals of corallistine could not be obtained we turned to the acyl derivatives. After some experimentation, we chose the 6'-isobutyloxycarbonyl derivative **3** which crystallized from methanol, giving yellow crystals m.p. 204° . A crystal ($0.9 \times 0.4 \times 0.05\text{ mm}$) was mounted on an automatic 4-circle diffractometer with graphite monochromatized $\text{CuK}\alpha$ radiation ($\lambda = 1.5418\text{ \AA}$). The crystal space group was triclinic $P\bar{1}$, with $a = 18.110(5)$, $b = 8.238(2)$, $c = 6.303(1)\text{ \AA}$, $\alpha = 108.53(1)$, $\beta = 92.38(1)$, $\gamma = 96.84(1)^\circ$, $V = 882.10\text{ \AA}^3$, $Z = 2$. From 3187 measured independent reflexions, 1092 only with $I > 1.5\sigma(I)$ were included in the computations. The reflexions were corrected for Lorentz and polarisation effects, but not for absorption.

The structure was solved by direct methods.⁸ Atomic coordinates and anisotropic thermal parameters were refined by least squares refinements to a discrepancy factor of $R = 5.12\%$ and $R_w = 5.17\%$. The minimized function in the refinement was $\sum w(|F_o| - |F_c|)^2$ with a final weighting scheme $w = 1/[\sigma^2(F_o) + 0.0009 F_o^2]$. All hydrogen atoms were located on difference-Fourier maps. However, to take in account the deficient number of data with regard of the number of refinement parameters, H atoms were refined using rigid groups (methyl) or in theoretical position (C-H, N-H) and assigned the equivalent isotropic thermal parameter of C or N bounded atoms. The highest residue on the final electronic density map was 0.4 e/\AA^3 .^{3,9}

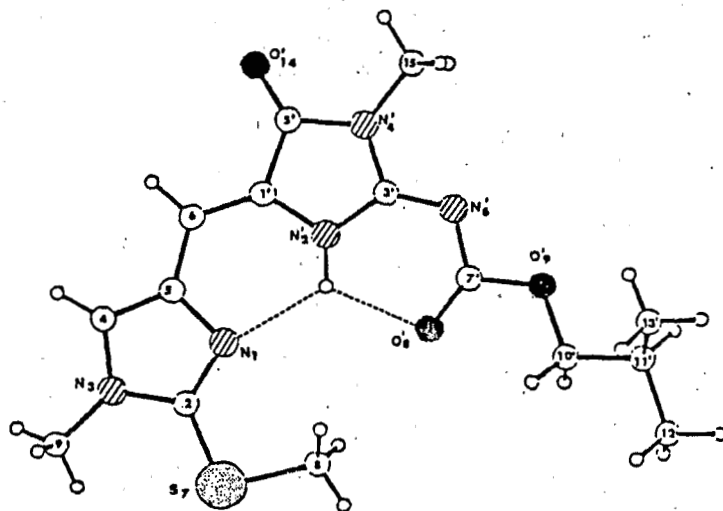
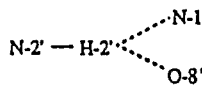


Fig.1. Computer generated drawing of the final X-ray model of the 6'-isobutyloxycarbonyl derivative **3**

The final X-ray model of the 6'-isobutyloxycarbonyl derivative 3 is illustrated in Fig.1. The peculiar planar molecular conformation is due to an intramolecular bifurcated hydrogen bond¹⁰



Except for the C-13' methyl group, all non H-atoms are located in the mean plane of the molecule, the maximum deviation from planarity being 0.3 Å.

On the basis of the above X-Ray results, corallistine was assigned structure 2, which is quite different from the pteridine 1b, except that two rings both with two heterocyclic nitrogen are also present. The imidazolidone fragment shown as the preferred endocyclic imino tautomer¹¹ has been found previously in marine organisms¹² attached to a tryptophane derivative in the same way as to the 2-thiohistidine derivative in 2. The geometry of the central double bond was shown or presumed as *E* in most of the tryptophane compounds. The geometry of the $\Delta^{6,1'}$ double bond of corallistine must be *Z* like in its 6'-isobutyloxycarbonyl derivative 3. Although stabilisation of the *Z* configuration by hydrogen bonding as in 3 was ruled out, isomerisation during acylation was very unlikely, as migration of the double bond to the $\Delta^{1'}$ position involved in the isomerisation process was electronically unfavorable. No *Z-E* isomerisation was observed for 2 itself, which appeared as a pure compound, and H-6 was not exchangeable for deuterium in neutral (CD₃OD, DMSO-d₆) or acidic medium (CF₃COOD). The 2-thiohistidine fragment is found in ergothioneine (2-thiohistidine trimethylbetaine), which is a constituent of numerous living tissues¹³ and has also been extracted from *Limulus polyphemus* L. (Crustacea)¹⁴. Incidentally, ergothioneine forms part of the molecule of clithioneine recently isolated from the Japanese fungus *Clitocybe acromegalga*.¹⁵ However, the 2-methylthioimidazole moiety present in 2 has never been found before in a natural product; corallistine represents thus an original compound.

The chloromethylenic extract of *Corallistes fulvodesmus* L. & L. was cytotoxic against KB and P388 cells (DI₅₀ < 10 µg), but corallistine itself showed no toxicity against these cells.

References and Notes

1. Animal Material : The sponge was collected in course of the dragging campaigns of the ORSTOM-CNRS Programme "Substances Marines d'Intérêt Biologiques" (SMIB) by the N/O Vauban in the south of New-Caledonia at a depth of 500 m. A zoological sample is kept at the ORSTOM Centre in Nouméa under the reference R 1385. The sponge has been identified by Prof. C. Levi, whom we wish to thank.
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4. W. Pfeleiderer, in "Comprehensive Heterocyclic Chemistry", A.R. Katritzky and CH.W. Rees Eds., Vol. 3, Part B, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1984.
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6. Spectral Data of corallistine 2 : UV (MeOH) : 206 nm (ϵ 18000), 222 nm (sh. ϵ 11000), 363 nm

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