Studies on the Constituents of Artemisia annua
Part II

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Abstract

The present paper is a continuation of our study on the Chinese traditional herb Artemisia annua L. [1—5], describing several additional constituents: Qinghaosu IV and V (V, VII), Qinghao acid (VIII) [6], chrysosplenol (VIa) [7] and a paraffinic alcohol; V, VII and VIII are compounds with unreported structures.

Introduction

A number of our earlier papers have been devoted to studies of chemical constituents isolated from Artemisia annua L. (Compositae), the most notable constituent being the antimalarial Qinghaosu (I) [1—4], a peroxidic lactone with unique structure. Other constituents include Qinghaosu-I—III (II—IV), a flavonol (VI), scopoletin and a few terpenes from the essential oil [5].

This paper deals with the isolation and characterization of V, VIa, VII, VIII and a paraffinic alcohol.

It is pertinent here to point out the close sterochemical kinship among the previously established structures I—IV. They all belong to the amorphane series (IX) [9], which has a cis decalin skeleton with the isopropyl group trans to the hydrogen on the ring juncture. Compounds I and IV are further distinguished by the presence of a modified seven-membered A-ring as the result of insertion of an extra ether oxygen.

* For Part I, see ref. 5.
### Results and Discussion

Qinghaosu-IV (V) is a colourless crystalline compound with m.p. 172–173°. MS molecular weight 282 (M⁺) agreed with C₁₅H₂₂O₅. Hydroxyl and lactonic carbonyl groups can be inferred from its IR spectrum (3450, 1728 cm⁻¹). The ¹H NMR spectrum displayed the following features: δ 0.95 (d, J = 6 Hz, 10-CH₃), 1.20 (d, J = 6, 11-CH₃), 1.65 (s, 4-CH₃), 2.30 (m, H-C-5), 3.60 (br, H-C-3), 5.60 (s, H-C-5) and an exchangeable OH group at 1.88. Except for the two signals at δ 1.88 and 3.60, the NMR spectra of IV and V are almost superposable, thus leading to the conclusion that the extra oxygen of V is in the form of a hydroxyl group with only four possible places (C-2, 3, 8 and 9) for its accommodation. Eu(fod)₃ was used for its allocation. Addition of successive aliquots of the shift reagent gave rise to linear changes of chemical shifts. In the case of qinghaosu III (IV), we have for 10-CH₃, δ 0.95 → 0.96 → 1.16 → 1.60; for 11-CH₃, 1.20 → 1.42 → 2.20 → 2.40; for 4-CH₃, 1.54 → 1.55 → 1.74 → 1.75; and for H-C-5, 5.55 → 1.75 → 6.20 → 6.40. Qinghaosu IV (V) gave the corresponding shifts: 10-CH₃, δ 1.04 → 1.46 → 1.77 → 2.15; 11-CH₃, 1.27 → 1.99 → 2.60 → 3.42; 4-CH₃, 1.65 → 3.93 → 5.74 → 7.25; H-C-5, 5.70 → 6.91 → 8.06 → 9.18. The marked shifts for 4-CH₃ and H-C-5 in compound V is compatible only with an OH group at position-3, and the W½ 6 Hz) of the H-C-3 multiplet (hence equatorial) indicates an a-orientation for the OH group (axial). The structure of IV has been firmly established by its preparation from qinghaosu (I) by catalytic hydrogenation [5].

Chrysosplenol (6a) has very similar UV and ¹H NMR spectra to eupatin (3, 5, 3'-triOH, 6, 7, 4'-triOME) [7]. However, large discrepancies in m.p. of the acetates (155–157°C; 219–221°C for eupatin acetate) led us to a direct comparison of their IR spectra which also displayed conspicuous differences. The structure of chrysosplenol (VIIa) was confirmed by the following facts. Methylation gave the hexamethyl ether, identical with an authentic specimen. The 5-OH showed a characteristic chelated NMR shift at δ 12.60. Methylation with CD₂N₂ in CH₃OH gave three partially deuterated methyl groups onto the original phenolic hydroxyls, and solvent shifts (benzene vs. chloroform [10]) revealed 5, 3' and 4' as the labelled positions. Further confirmation came from alkali fusion of the ethylated derivative, whereby 3,4-diethoxybenzoic acid (m.p. and MS) was obtained.

Qinghao acid (VIII) forms colourless cubes with m.p. 131°, [α]D²⁰+36° (0.01, CHCl₃) and MS m/e 234 (M⁺), compatible with C₁₅H₂₂O₄. IR peaks at 3480—3300 cm⁻¹, m.p. 131°, [α]D+36° (0.01, CHCl₃) and MS m/e 234 (M⁺). The formula of C₁₅H₂₂O₃ can be inferred from the UV spectrum to be octacosanol (C₂₈H₅₇OH), probably contaminated by some C₂₆ alcohol (ca. 5%) as evidenced by a tiny peak at m/e 420. Further fragmentations of interest involved successive losses of 28 units from m/e 392, giving peaks at m/e 364 and 336. The last mentioned peak however was stronger than usual [11], indicating the possible contamination by a C₂₆ alcohol. Ulbelen et al. [12] reported the isolation of a C₂₆ alcohol from the same species, using elemental analysis as the main evidence. Since C₂₆ and C₂₈ alcohols cannot be adequately differentiated by elemental analysis, there is room for the possibility of their sample being also octacosanol.

#### Experimental

Melting points were not corrected. IR spectra were taken with KBr discs on an IR-S spectrometer. ¹H NMR spectra were taken with CDCl₃ solutions on WH-90, with TMS as the internal standard. MS were recorded with MM70–70H spectrometer.

**Plant Material**

Artemisia annua L. is a regular commodity, available in practically all warehouses for Chinese herbs. However, there might well be variations in chemical constituents with different localities, which were therefore specified below.

Silica gel columns and plates were used and eluted with the mixed solvent of petroleum ether and ethyl acetate in individually specified proportions.
Qinghaosu-IV

Plant material from Sichuan Province was extracted with petroleum ether and the solvent removed. The crude extract was chromatographed. Qinghaosu-IV displayed only a single spot on TLC (1:1 mixed solvent, 2 % phosphomolybdic acid spray). It was purified by recrystallization from ethanol. MS, m/e (%): 282 (M+, 5), 238 (1), 222 (75), 207 (3), 204(11), 194 (9), 178 (14), 166 (18), 150 (23), 137 (14), 122 (5), 107 (11), 93 (11), 81 (9), 74 (4), 69 (7), 55 (15), 43 (100). IR (cm\(^{-1}\)): 3450 (s), 2950 (w), 2870 (m), 1625 (m), 1445 (m), 1400 (w), 1380 (w), 1320 (w), 1274 (m), 1210 (m), 1185 (w), 1170 (w), 1140 (m), 1080 (m), 1050 (m), 1015 (m), 970 (m), 940 (w), 920 (m), 865 (91), 820 (w), 785 (w), 765 (w), 715 (w). Compounds VIa, VIII and the fatty alcohol were isolated from the plant material of the Beijing area. The ethereal extracts were shaken with 2 % aqueous sodium hydroxide, which upon acidification gave the crude acid fraction. From the chromatographic fractions with 95:5, 85:15 and 65:35 solvent compositions, were obtained qinghao acid (VIII), a fatty alcohol and chrysosplenol (VIa) respectively.

The non-acidic fraction from ether as mentioned above was concentrated, mixed with polyamide powder and percolated with 47 % ethyl alcohol. After stripping of solvent, the residue was extracted again with ether and the crude extract was chromatographed on a column. Qinghaosu V came down from the 6:4 portion, showing one spot on TLC (1:1 mixed solvent, violet spot when sprayed with 2 % vanillin).

Qinghao acid

The crude acid displayed a single spot on TLC (9:1 mixed solvent, 2 % vanillin-H\(_2\)SO\(_4\) spray). It was purified by recrystallization from petroleum ether as transparent prisms, soluble in sodium bicarbonate. MS, m/e (%): 234 (M+, 63), 219 (5), 216 (6), 206 (6), 201 (3), 190 (13), 178 (6), 173 (6), 161 (8), 147 (6), 136 (28), 121 (100), 105 (17), 93 (38), 87 (6), 71 (25), 67 (9), 55 (16), 41 (22). IR (cm\(^{-1}\)): 3480—2590 (br), 1690 (s), 1625 (m), 1445 (m), 1400 (w), 1380 (w), 1320 (w), 1274 (m), 1210 (w), 1180 (w), 1155 (m), 1110 (w), 1080 (w), 1030 (w), 990 (w), 940 (m), 920 (w), 880 (w), 820 (w), 795 (w), 715 (w).

Diol from reduction of qinghao-1 by LAH. The diol (IIa) so obtained was an oil. \(^{1}H\)NMR: 0.85 (d, J = 6, 10-CH\(_3\)), 1.25 (s, 4-CH\(_3\)), 5.50 (br, H-C=3), 3.80 (d, J = 3.7, CH\(_3\)OH), 4.19 (br, H-C=5).

The fatty alcohol Crude product as one spot on TLC (9:1 mixed solvent, 5 % ethanolic phosphomolybdic acid spray). White powder from petroleum ether-chloroform. MS, m/e (%): 392 (9), 378 (2), 364 (22), 350 (2), 336 (14), 322 (2), 308 (4), 294 (3), 280 (3), 266 (3), 252 (4), 238 (4), 224 (4), 210 (5), 196 (6), 182 (6), 167 (11), 153 (14), 137 (21), 125 (37), 111 (58), 97 (97), 83 (100), 69 (75), 57 (92), 43 (75).

Chrysosplenol (VIa) Crude product as one spot on paper chromatography (Xinhua filter paper, 30 % acetic acid as eluant. 1 % AlCl\(_3\) spray). Light yellow crystals from ethanol (twice), m.p. 221—223\(^\circ\) (lit. 235—6\(^\circ\) [7]). MS, m/e (%): 360 (M+, 100), 359 (44), 346 (11), 345 (50), 343 (5), 342 (8), 341 (21), 332 (5), 317 (8). The triacetate had m.p. 155—157\(^\circ\) (lit. 159—160\(^\circ\) [7]). When fully methylated, m.p. 141—142\(^\circ\).

Qinghaosu V

The crude material was twice recrystallized from ethyl alcohol. MS, m/e (%): 250 (M+, 24), 235 (7), 233 (6), 232 (15), 217 (7), 208 (18), 192 (18), 180 (15), 177 (10), 174 (8), 161 (11), 147 (15), 135 (16), 134 (12), 133 (13), 121 (15), 119 (15), 107 (26), 105 (19), 95 (27), 93 (27), 91 (31), 84 (13), 82 (23), 81 (28), 79 (28), 77 (20), 71 (35), 67 (25), 65 (10), 55 (32), 53 (30), 43 (100).

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References


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