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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

MASON, J.A.

THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
33RD & SPRUCE STREETS, PHILADELPHIA 4

May 4, 1949

Dear Jack:

Thanks so much for the loan of the appended book, and apologies for having kept it so long. As I always have more urgent work to do both at office and home I kept it to read on occasional railroad trips to New York, etc., and finished it on the last one.

Most interesting and entertainingly written. Quite an expedition and, obviously, a classic one. Satterthwaite had the impression that you were on the expedition, which would have been a grand experience, but, as you give the personnel on the flyleaf, I opine that the rumor isn't so.

Thanks so much.

Cordially yours,

Alm

J. Alden Mason

Dr. John Fogg,
Vice Provost

May 10. Finally got around to delivering this in person today at 1.15 but found office locked. Sorry. Thanks.

Alm

MASON, A.

725 Conestoga Road
Berwyn, Pa.

December 8, 1956

Dr. John M. Fogg Jr.
Morris Arboretum
Chestnut Hill, Pa.

Dear Jack:

Here's the dope on the question that we mentioned last night. It may be of interest to you. Also you may have some ideas on the identification of these plants, which I would most appreciate, as opinions seem to differ so.

In 1913 I got some native "perdones" from Tepecano Indians of Azqueltán, in the valley of Río de Bolaños in northern Jalisco. These prayers were published in one of the earliest numbers (Vol. 1, No. 2) of the International Journal of American Linguistics, pp. 91-153, 1918. The prayer in question is on pp. 54-56 of the re-numbered reprint. Now that I have time (!) I am working up the full report on the religion of these Indians.

The perdon in question is to gain a sweetheart. The procedure might be considered black magic. The boy makes a figure or doll of his clothes and decorates it with the flowers of five narcotic (!) plants. The 64¢ question is: what are they?

Huizache. Tepecano name u'par.
Identification as published (probably Millsbaugh): Pithecolobium albicans.
Langman: probably correct. & Campeche.
McVaugh: Above plant (Pi. s) known only from Yucatan. More likely Acacia farnesiana (L.) Willd., or some similar species. Used medicinally, but apparently not a narcotic.
"Dr. Miranda, top-notch botanist; in letter from Langman: Acacia tortuosa is the more common form, especially in grasslands.

Palo Mulato, Tepecano: sa'mar
Published identification: Xanthoxylum pentanome
Langman: May be xanthoxylum; might be Elaphrium (!)
McVaugh: Xanth. pent. doesn't occur in Mexico. Palo Mulato sometimes applied to Bursera (formerly called Elaphrium). Best guess is Xanthoxylum fagara (L.) Sargent; occurs in Jalisco.
Miranda: Palo Mulato can also be Bursera.

Garambullo, Tepewano: gi'suri'G. (The most uncertain one)
Published "unidentified"
Langman: Several possibilities: Arctostaphylos ?, Condalia ? Rosa montezumae ?
McVaugh: Name applied to several shrubs with hard red berries or fruits. Most likely Arctostaphylos arguta (Zucc.) DC. "Grows in northern Jalisco and has some reputation as a narcotic plant."
Medina: Name generally applied to a cactus, Myrtillocactus geometrizans (!) which has small red fruits.

Rosa Maria. Tepecano a'ra'G
 Published: Cannabis indica, "Indian hemp," "hashish", Marihuana.
 Langman: " " " "
 McVaugh: "Cannot find this name at all. Martinez (Plantas medicinales de Mexico, 1944) does not list the name in his index, or as a common name for the marihuana plant." Possibly informant said "Rosa amarilla", apparently applied rather commonly to Cochlospermum vitifolium (Willd.) Spreng, "a showy flowered tree which is used medicinally, and which grows in your area."
 Medina: Rosa Maria is given in Martinez Catalogo de nombres vulgares y cientificos de plantas mexicanas, 1937: Cannabis sativa var indica.
 (I thought there was no question of this being Cannabis.)

Toloache. Tepecano: ko'trup
 Published: Nahuatl toloatzin, Datura stramonium ("Jimson weed")
 Langman: " " " "
 McVaugh: Probably Datura stramonium, but sometimes applied to other species of Datura, and other solanaceous plants.
 Medina: No comment on this; probably superfluous.

I'd much appreciate your comments of this. Ida's last recent letter was in longhand and not so clear, especially the scientific names, for one to whom they are all exotic.

My reactions to them are:

Toloache. Certainly Datura, and almost certainly stramonium.
Rosa Maria. In spite of McVaugh's objections, and suggestion of Cochlospermum, I think this is Cannabis.
Huizache: Pretty likely Acacia, and probably tortuosa. *Bauhinia*
Palo mulato: No better guess than Zanthoxylum fagara.
Garambullo: Almost a toss-up between Arctostaphylos arguta and Mutillocactus geometrizans. What's your preference?

Good to see you and wife last night. Good luck to you both.
 Merry Christmas!

Cordially yours,



J. Alden Mason

December 19, 1956

Dr. J. Alden Mason
725 Conestoga Road
Berwyn, Pa.

Dear Alden:

After reading your letter of December 8th, I realize that as usual I should have kept my big mouth shut. When you talked to me about this matter the other night at dinner I had some hopes that I might have access to information which would be of help to you. I realize now that you have not only tapped all of the references at my command but have even gone farther. I did not understand that you had received opinions from my former student, McVaugh, as well as from Miranda and Medina.

According to Ida Langman, Miranda is today the best informed botanist in Mexico and I feel that considerable weight should be given his opinion. However, this is one of those situations where the application of local names is frequently difficult, if not impossible, and I regret very much that I can add nothing to the interpretations which you have already obtained.

However, since I am going to Mexico next week, I shall take your letter along with me in the hopes that in consultation with some of the botanists there I can achieve some clarification which may be helpful to you.

With best wishes and warm regards,

Sincerely yours,

John M. Fogg, Jr.
Director

May 20, 1957

Dr. J. Alden Mason
The University Museum
34th and Spruce Streets
Philadelphia 4, Pa.

Dear Alden:

Here is the piece on Mexico which I promised.

It is, as I warned you, (a) pretty superficial and "touristy,"
and (b) too long. Please feel free to shorten or modify it
in any way that you desire.

It was good to see you here last Thursday and I hope
your group will make this visit to the Arboretum an annual
fixture.

Sincerely yours,

enc.