BISMARCKBURG –
TWO FAMOUS COLLECTING LOCALITIES IN AFRICA

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During my studies on African rhinoceros beetles (Dynastinae), I often came across the collecting locality “Bismarckburg”, mostly located in ex-German Togo, sometimes, however, in the former Deutsch-Ostafrika. Usually zoologists associate Bismarckburg with Togo. Leston (1968) in this journal and Davis & Misonne (1964) mention only the Togoan locality of this name.

Bismarckburg (Togo, 1888–1897):
Situated 8°11'06"N, 0°39'57"E\(^1\), 707 m above sea level, the German research station was once located in the centre of the colony area. Today, after the western part of the German Togo was added to Ghana, it is only 5 km away from the Ghanaian border. The mean yearly rainfall was 1389 mm (7 years average) (Zech, 1920). Detailed meteorological data were published in the “Mitteilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten” (Anon., 1893; Mischlich, 1899; Maurer, 1907).

Bismarckburg was founded by Dr Ludwig Wolf on June 2nd, 1888 “sur la colline aride d’Adodo\(^2\) dans l’Akposso – Adélé” (Simtaro, 1982; Büttnner, 1893a). It was both a scientific, mainly agricultural research station and an administrative centre. The aims and activities of the station are depicted by Büttnner (1893a). Photographs of Bismarckburg shortly after its foundation and of the “Jeggebach bei Bismarckburg” are given by Büttnner (1893b). Two years before, Kling (1890) published a plan of the Bismarckburg station and its surrounding area. The fauna of the Bismarckburg region was well studied especially during expeditions of the above-mentioned Hauptmann Eugen Kling and Dr Richard Büttnner (Kling & Büttnner, 1893; Karsch, 1893). Beyond that, many individual publications in various journals deal with the Bismarckburg fauna.

Because it lacked efficiency as a trading base, Bismarckburg was abandoned by the Germans in 1894. Leutnant von Doering transferred the station to Kété-Hedwigswart (Kété-Kratchi), which is now in Ghana (Simtaro, 1982; Schmidt, 1895: 193).

One year later, Adam Mischlich of the Swiss Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel (“Baseler Mission”) settled in Bismarckburg, and moved on to Katschenke (Katchanké) in 1896, where he founded a school (Öhler, 1896: 22, 1897: 22). I do not know if any collecting was

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\(^1\) determined with the aid of Kling 1890, Doering 1895, Sprigade 1907, and Institut Géographique National 1969.

\(^2\) Adodo according to Büttnner (l.c.); Atado according to Sprigade 1907; Adadjé according to Cornevin (1962: 143), but this is the name of a rivulet which was the drinking water source for Bismarckburg (Wolf in Schmidt (1895): 183).
effected by the Basel Mission, but Mischlich was undoubtedly interested in science. He studied the meteorology of Bismarckburg and launched a geological expedition (Mischlich, 1899; Anon., 1899a). The whole station at Bismarckburg burned down on November 27th, 1897 (Mischlich, 1899). In the same year Mischlich withdrew from the missionary society (Oehler, 1898: 22; Miescher, 1902: 19) and became a Government official (as assistant) at the German station Kété-Kratchi, becoming its head in August 1900 as successor to Graf Zech (Anon. 1898, id. 1900). Like the German trading base Bismarckburg, the missionary work of the school in Katchanké was not satisfactory (Oehler 1898: 26). After Mischlich’s leaving, no successor was appointed missionary to Katchanké (Miescher l.c.). This was finally the end of Bismarckburg. However, the “Stationsbezirk” (district) Bismarckburg continued to exist at least till June, 1899 (Köhler, 1899).

In 1919, the ruins of Bismarckburg came under the jurisdiction of French governed Togo (Cornevin, 1962: 215). The Bremen Mission (Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft) never had a station or a school in Bismarckburg (cfr. Seekamp, 1908 and Schlunk, 1914), though it took over all the Basel institutions in Togo in 1904. Anon. (1904: 3) stated: “Alle Versuche in Adele, in Bismarckburg oder Ketschenke, eine Europäerstation zu erhalten, zerschlungen sich.” Unfortunately, the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft in Bremen has no archivist at present, so that no confirmation can be achieved from there (Lenz in litt., 14.ii.1992). The collections effected by the Bremen Mission in Bismarckburg as mentioned by Leston (l.c.) are a complete mystery to me.

As shown on von Doering’s (1895) and Sprigade’s (1907) maps, Bismarckburg is not identical with Yégué (Yege, Yègué, Yegge, Jege) (contra Davis & Misonne, 1964), nor with Katchanké (Kétschenke, Gätjenke) as Anon. (1898) may indicate.

As mentioned above, Bismarckburg was initially located in the centre of the German Togoland. After World War I, the German colony was divided twice between Great Britain and France. The first partition took place on August 27th, 1914 in which Bismarckburg and even Lomé became British. The second partition which is now manifested in the Togoan-Ghanaian border followed on May 7th, 1919. A map of the three outlines of Togo is given by Cornevin (1962: 214) and by Hall (1971: 494). Additionally, the latter discusses some locality problems on this matter.

In compiling chorologic lists of African species’ distributions, it is necessary to bear in mind that the modern Togo is only a part of the ancient German Togo, which extended to the Volta and the Đaka River. Often, western locations of the German colony have been cited under Togo while they are in Ghana. This is scientifically irrelevant as are all political boundaries in Africa, but causes confusion and complicates the localization of the collecting points on actual maps.
Bismarckburg (Tanzania, since 1898):
In 1898 Hauptmann (= captain) v. Prittwitz founded a station on the southeastern shore of Lake Tanganyika in the Ukonogo region which has been called Bismarckburg since May 1899. It was a military liaison office between Langenburg and Udjidji, filled by the 6th company. Since 1907 it was a branch (Bezirksnebenstelle) of the local office (Bezirksamt) Udjidji (today: Ujiji) (Nigmann, 1911: 160; Anon., 1899b). A photograph of Bismarckburg and its environs is given by Meyer, 1909 (pl. 18, fig. 4). During the German period the place where the Bismarckburg station was built was known as Kassanga (Anon., 1901) and as it developed, the town itself was named Bismarckburg.

It is situated at 8°28'S, 31°09'E, and 810 m above sea level. The mean yearly rainfall was (in the German period) 814 mm (7 years' average). In the beginning of the German colonization, the town Bismarckburg was the capital of the district (Bezirk) having the same name. The district, of about 90,400 km², comprised the regions of Ufipa, Ukonongo, Ugala and Uwende (Uhlig, 1920).

In the Bezirk Bismarckburg, Regierungsrat (= senior civil servant) Wilhelm Methner collected Coleoptera, now deposited in the Zoologisches Museum der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany and some Dynastinae (via coll. Frings) in the Zoologisches Forschungsinstitut und Museum Alexander Koenig, Bonn. Bismarckburg is the type locality of the hyracoid mammal Procavia (Heterohyrax) muenzneri Brauer, 1913 (Swynnerton, 1946: 59) which is now considered a subspecies of Heterohyrax brucei (Gray, 1868) and of Temnorhynchus kasanganus Krell (1993) (Col., Dynastinae).

Whereas the Toguan Bismarckburg remained a provincial research station with only scientific importance and therefore not very attractive for politicians and financiers, the East African Bismarckburg, without scientific orientation, had a telegraph and a post office, a Government school and some business establishments. It grew and still exists as Kasanga.

REFERENCES


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