

Ergebnisse der Deutschen Afghanistan-Expedition 1956 der Landessammlungen für Naturkunde Karlsruhe

Formicidae (Hymenoptera Aculeata)

by

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Dr. H. G. AMSEL has kindly permitted me to examine a small but interesting collection of Formicidae taken during the course of the West German expedition to Afghanistan in 1956. The collection consists of about a 100 mounted specimens which were taken by Dr. AMSEL and his colleagues Dr. J. DELERÉ and Dr. S. WILKE from a few localities in the northern part of the country. The localities include Polichromi and Andkhui in the extreme north, Gulbahar in the north-east, Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in the east and Herat, the main town in the west. The collecting sites were mainly dry steppe with sparse vegetation at moderate altitude, from 330 to 1700 m. above sea level. The species taken include the following: —

Camponotus (Tanaemyrmex) turkestanicus EMERY; Polichromi, Herat. 2 ♀♀, 1 ♂.

Camponotus (Tanaemyrmex) turkestanus ANDRÉ; Gulbahar, 1 ♀, 7 ♂♂.

Camponotus (Tanaemyrmex) sp. ? Herat. 1 ♂.

Cataglyphis setipes FOREL; Herat. 9 ♀♀.

Cataglyphis (Monocampus) emeryi KARAWAIEV; Herat, Polichromi. 6 ♀♀.

Proformica deserta KUZNETZOV-UGAMSKIJ; Gulbahar, Andkhui. 1 ♂, 7 ♀♀.

Formica bipilosa KARAWAIEV; Polichromi, 9 ♂♂, 14 ♀♀.

Acantholepis frauenfeldi MAYR; Herat. 15 ♀♀.

Plagiolepis pygmaea LATREILLE; Herat. 1 ♀.

Tapinoma simrothi KRAUSSE; Herat. 1 ♀, 10 ♀♀.

Pheidole arenarum RUZSKY; Herat, Kabul. 5 ♀♀.

Monomorium (Xeromyrmex) sp. ? Polichromi. 1 ♂.

Messor meridionalis ANDRÉ; Herat. 10 ♀♀.

Tetramorium striativentre MAYR; Polichromi. 1 ♀.

Cataglyphis setipes is widely distributed through North and Central India, and Herat probably represents the north-west extremity of its range. Further westward this species appears to be replaced by others of the *Cataglyphis bicolor* FAB. group from which it is distinguished by the bristle-like thickened tibial hairs. *Acantholepis frauenfeldi*, of which the Herat specimens may represent a dark local form, and *apinoma simrothi*, distinguished from *T. erraticum* of Europe by the deeper cleft in the front clypeal border, extend widely through the South Mediterranean. *Plagiolepis pygmaea* is abundant throughout South Europe. *Messor meridionalis* and *Pheidole arenarum* occur throughout the Middle East and in parts of South-

east Europe. The latter is distinguished from the common European, *P. pallidula* by the pronounced backward prolongation of the head in the soldier caste.

The remaining species have their centre of distribution in Turkestan. *Camponotus turkestanicus* is characterised by the long curved subcephalic hairs. *C. turkestanus* is a relatively small pale species with the yellowish areas of the body predominating in all castes. The single small *Camponotus* ♂ from Herat has scattered short erect appendage hairs but is not at present clearly identifiable from existing descriptions. *Cataglyphis emeryi* is distinguished from the European *C. cursor*. FONSC. by its shorter antennal segments and less shining appearance. It is one of several species in this group that occur in Turkestan.

Proformica deserta is of special interest in having the epinotal spiracle elongated and the maxillary palps of similar proportions to those of the subgenus *Monocambus*. It resembles *P. nasuta* NYL. of Europe in general appearance. The species was described from one locality in Russian Turkestan. *Formica bipilosa* is one of the S. Russian species of the *Formica cinerea* MAYR group. It is distinguished by its pale colour in both ♂ and ♀ and by the subcephalic hairs which are reduced to one or two at each side of the head. The single ♂ *Monomorium* from Polichromi appears to be related to *M. salomonis* of the South Mediterranean but differs in the more shining body and more profuse pilosity. *Tetramorium striativentre* differs from the Mediterranean species of this genus by its very finely striated gaster which has a silky appearance.

These species are discussed more fully elsewhere (Collingwood, 1960) together with others collected by the Danish expedition to Afghanistan in 1948. Full references are given in that paper and are not therefore repeated here.

References:

COLLINGWOOD C. A. 1960. The third Danish expedition to Central Asia 1948. Formicidae (Hymenoptera Aculeata) from. Afghanistan.

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Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

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