

The *Epimyрма* species of Corsica

(Hymenoptera, Formicidae)

By Alfred Buschinger*)

Institut für Zoologie, Fachbereich Biologie der Technischen Hochschule Darmstadt

Abstract

Three species of the parasitic ant genus *Epimyрма* have been collected in the island of Corsica. The workerless *E. corsica* was described from there by one single female. *E. kraussei* and *E. ravouxi* are new for the island. Localities are indicated and some ecological and biological informations are given. The necessity for preservation of such localities is discussed.

Introduction

The ant genus *Epimyрма* Emery 1915 comprises about a dozen of described species, all of which are living as social parasites of *Leptothorax* species belonging to the subgenera *Myrafant* Smith 1950 or *Temnothorax* Mayr 1861. Several species are true slavemakers, others exhibit a degenerate dulosis, and one species is workerless, with a derived permanent parasitism (WINTER 1979; BUSCHINGER & WINTER 1982, 1983; WINTER & BUSCHINGER 1983).

Only one species was known to occur in the island of Corsica, *Epimyрма corsica* (Emery 1895). It was described by one dealate ♀. The life history of this species was studied in detail by BUSCHINGER & WINTER (1985).

During an excursion in March, 1982, which was mainly dedicated to the search for *E. corsica*, also two other species, *E. kraussei* Emery 1915 and *E. ravouxi* (André 1896) have been found. In the following I present the collecting data, together with some ecological and biological notes.

1. *Epimyрма corsica* (Emery 1895)

A total of 18 colonies were collected on March 28 and 30, in the Désert des Agriates, close to road no. D81 in the Col de Lavezzo, in about 420 m NN. The rocky area is covered by a not too dense macchia of 1-2 m height. The host species is *Leptothorax (Myrafant) exilis* Emery 1869. Colonies were found underneath of or between small flat stones lying on the ground. *E. corsica* is absolutely workerless, not only in the population of Corsica but as well in populations in the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia (BUSCHINGER & WINTER, 1985). Several of the colonies proved newly infested by *Epimyрма* queens, since they were just about throttling the *Leptothorax* queens. Following our field and subsequent laboratory observations the young sexuals during late summer mate inside the mother nests. The young queens hibernate there, and leave the nest in search for own host colonies in early spring. Except from the two populations mentioned no other localities of *E. corsica* are known up till present.

*) Supported by a grant of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft