Discussion

The ant fauna of Corsica has been studied quite intensively (CASEVITZ-WEULERSSE 1974). Nevertheless it is still possible to find new species there (ESPADALER et al. 1984), or species which were not known before to occur in this island. The case of *Epimyrma* reported in this paper is of particular interest with regard to several aspects: As was shortly mentioned, *E. corsica* and *E. kraussei* sexuals mate in their mother nests. They do not fly, and the young queens disperse on foot, after dealation. This behavior raises questions on how and when the island could have been reached by these species from the mainland, or vice versa. An artifical introduction appears unlikely, since a socially parasitic ant is always depending on the presence of a dense population of its host species. Thus, the connections between the *Epimyrma populations* of Corsica and those from the mainland must be interrupted since a considerable time. The populations therefore could be very important in future studies e. g. of zoogeography or population genetics of this genus as well as of its evolution. The existence of several species with permanent inbreeding, thus quasi-clonal structure of local populations, very weak dispersion capacities and nevertheless wide ranges is highly remarkable, and it cannot yet be convincingly explained. For these reasons it is a necessity to document the localities where such rare and interesting ants do occur, and, moreover, to preserve the sites! Preservation of their near-natural habitats is not only the best means to preserve the ants themselves, but also numerous other, often rare or little-known invertebrates. The existence of socially parasitic ants is an indicator for long-term stable and undisturbed conditions (BUSCHINGER 1979).

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