

SUMMARY

About one thousand Ants, collected by Italian naturalists in Pelagian isles (Lampedusa, Lampione, Linosa) are studied here. Valuable is their comparison with Ants from other small islands in South mediterranean, explored by the author (Habibas, Galite).

The poorness of insular fauna is striking, compared with the richness of Tunisian fauna (180 species at least). Each of these isles has only one to twelve species, even in Habibas, which are at about 10 km off the coasts near Oran, and covered with a dense vegetation. Between Pelagie islands, 100 km off central Tunisia, Lampedusa shows only 9 different Ants, Linosa 3 and Lampione 1.

The insular climate differs from the continental one, by air moisture, mists or rains which are frequent even during summer. Too xerophil Insectes, such as all *Cataglyphis* and the majority of the 26 *Messor* known from North Africa, are eliminated. But 8 species succeed rather well in several isles: *Aphaenogaster crocea* from Atlas, *Messor barbara* and *sancta*, *Crematogaster Auberti*, *Plagiolepis Schmitzi*, *Camponotus sylvaticus* (the last five largely mediterranean). *Tetramorium punicum* and *Tapinoma Simrothi* are probably coming from Orient, but are also very common in Berberia.

Four other Ants, rarely caught in islands but enduring very moisty places in Africa, are able to future importation in isles. For examples: *Pheidole pallidula*, *Aphaenogaster depilis*.

The majority of insular Ants seem to come from North Africa, disobeying to general rules of the other fauna of the same isles, coming chiefly from southern Europe. It is possible that those social Insects are more sensible to summer temperatures, higher off Tunisia owing to latitude.

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