

SANTSCHI (1941) raised this variety to specific status by merely stating «La tête est un peu plus large que chez *fuliginosus* ...» and without any other justification. In his comprehensive monograph of the genus *Lasius*, WILSON (1955) commented on the geographic variation of *Lasius fuliginosus*, and mentioned a sample of queens from Odawara, Japan, that fitted well with Forel's comments on pubescence, adding that «A case may be made in the future for according this form specific status»; but he went not further as «the associated workers and males are *hardly* (ours italic) separable by themselves from the typical *fuliginosus*». WILSON (1955) designated a lectotype for the var. *nipponensis*; that lectotype showed the long pilosity of petiolar dorsal margin, «characteristic of the Japanese populations already described». He proposed formally the synonymy of var. *nipponensis* Forel under the species *L. fuliginosus* (Latreille). YAMAUCHI & HAYASHIDA (1968) retained that synonymy, and YAMAUCHI (1979) in a much informative paper, with careful measurements and indices, did not add to the state of the question and that name has been consistently used by Japanese authors. The name of *L. fuliginosus* is currently used in the Web page of Japanese ants (<http://ant.edb.miyakyo-u.ac.jp/HTMLS/INDEX.HTM>) although, interestingly, Onoyama (1980) expressed the view that the synonymy proposed by WILSON (1955) «might be erroneous». We concur. In 1990, KUPYANSKAYA published a useful revision of subgenus *Dendrolasius* from the Soviet Far East, still using the name *L. fuliginosus* for all those populations. The same name has been applied to North Korean samples (COLLINGWOOD, 1976, 1981). *Lasius fuliginosus* var. *orientalis* described by Karavaiev (1912) from Korea was provisionally synonymized with *L. fuliginosus* by WILSON (1955).

A recent exchange of *L. fuliginosus* samples among the authors permitted a thorough comparison of populations from Europe and its surrounding area and East Asia. We have confirmed morphological differences and feel necessary of a reassessment of taxonomic treatment. Some of those differences were yet noted by Forel in his original description of the var. *nipponensis*. Here we propose to resurrect the name *nipponensis* and to accord specific status — as *L. nipponensis* Forel — to East Asian and Far East European populations.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Specimens examined: the following specimens were examined for this study. Numbers in parentheses show those of workers, and of nests respectively. Croatia: Plitvice, 27-VII-1985, Romero leg. (2,1). France: Dieppe (Seine Maritime), Grouvelle (4,1); Sayat (Puy de Dôme) (6,1); Garches (Hauts de Seine), V-1916 (6,1). Italy: Emilia, Spilamberto, Minozzi leg. (7,1). Emilia, 21-VI-1903, Fiori leg. (2,1). Japan: Kyoto University (Kyoto Pref.), 6-X-1998, Akino leg. (10,1); Tsukuba (Ibaraki Pref.), 6-VII-1998, 27.8.1998 and 21-V-2000, Akino leg. (95,10); Mito (Ibaraki Pref.), 16-IX-1998, Akino leg. (10,1); Nakano-ku (Tokyo), 26-VIII-2000, Kubota leg. (10,2). Korea: Inch'ôn, 18-VIII-1990, Terayama leg. (2,1); Mt. Paektusan (North Korea), 2000 (no collecting day and month in a label), Choi leg. (2, 1). Russia: Sakhalin, 20-VII-1978, Kupyanskaya leg. (3,1). Spain: Arrazola (Navarra), 20-VII-1995, Espadaler leg. (10,1);