

SIX NEW SPECIES OF ANTS (INSECTA: HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE) FROM EGYPT

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ABSTRACT

Six new ant species from Egypt *Cerapachys collingwoodi*, *Cataglyphis agostii*, *Messor eglalae*, *Pheidole fadli*, *Solenopsis bakri* and *Tetramorium shirlae* were described.

INTRODUCTION

Despite all the records of the Egyptian ant fauna, there are only two analytical studies. The first one was carried out by Mohammed (1979) who revised the family Formicidae in Egypt. The author gave keys and descriptions of the subfamilies, genera and species. As a result of this study 36 varieties, 35 subspecies, 54 species under 22 genera are listed. Subsequent field work has revealed further new species and records new of ant species to the Egyptian ant fauna such as those given by Mohamed *et. al.* (2001) who presented a comparative study of ants from Dakahliya and South Sinai governorates, giving keys to the collected species. The authors recorded and described 7 new records, one from Dakahliya and 6 from South Sinai and a new species *Tetramorium salwae* Mohammed *et. al.* 2001 from Sinai.

Prior to the mentioned study of Mohammed (1979), very few fundamental works were carried out on the Egyptian Formicidae. The only notable contributions being the papers produced by Mayr (1904), Forel (1907), Santschi (1908), Karavaev (1911), Wheeler and Mann (1916), Menozzi (1929), Viehmeyer (1923), Santschi (1927), Alfieri (1931), Finzi (1936), Santschi (1936), Donisthorpe (1942) on the Egyptian ant fauna. It is worth mentioning that the work of Mohammed (1979) included keys to subfamilies, genera and species recorded from Egypt but which are now very much out of date and difficult to use or depend on them .

In 2003, another study was conducted by Galhoum and Basuony in which the authors studied the ant fauna of the Mediterranean coastal desert but this study cannot be considered as a true contribution to the knowledge of the Egyptian Formicidae. They recorded only eleven ant species from the surveyed areas, and this number does not reflect the high diversity of the ants in similar ecosystem areas and