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A NEW PANAMA *ECITON* (HYMENOPTERA, FORMICIDAE)

BY NEAL A. WEBER¹

The ants of the genus *Eciton* are the conspicuous terrestrial army ants of the American tropics. Those species having soldiers with large, fishhook-shaped mandibles are few in number, and constitute the subgenus *Eciton*. *Eciton hamatum* and *burchelli* occur over a large area of the American tropics and have been the chief subjects of the well-known studies by T. C. Schneirla, particularly from the point of view of their fascinating behavior and the underlying biological processes concerning brood production which condition it very intimately.

Schneirla, in the course of studies on Panama ecitons in late 1947, took a species of the subgenus *Eciton* which is described below. The species of this subgenus are so highly polymorphic that considerable caution is advisable in describing new forms until the range of variability has been worked out. The data obtained by Schneirla, however, warrant a name for his species, so clearly distinct morphologically from *hamatum* and *burchelli*.

The taxonomic history of the species of *Eciton* is a story of unusual confusion. The early collectors in the American tropics occasionally took the winged males at lights, along with other insects, and these were described as wasps. In the meanwhile the large soldier caste with mandibles like fishhooks had been described under various generic names. The realization that the males were really ants came much later. Still later came the correlating of males with soldiers or workers, a process which is likely to go on for some time, since many species are still known by only the male or only the soldier and worker castes.

¹ Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.