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THE TRINIDAD CAVE ANT *EREBOMYRMA (= SPELAEOMYRMEX) URICHI* (WHEELER), WITH A COMMENT ON CAVERNICOLOUS ANTS IN GENERAL*

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In 1922 W. M. Wheeler described a new pheidologetonine ant, *Spelaeomyrmex urichi*, which he regarded as allied to *Erebomyrma* but sufficiently removed to justify the erection of a separate genus. The eleven syntypes, all minor workers, were collected in "Guacharo Cave," Trinidad, occupied by the oil-bird or "guacharo" (*Steatornis caripensis* Humboldt). Their pale color, minute eyes, and long bristly pilosity suggested to Wheeler that they represent a truly cavernicolous, i.e. troglobitic, species. In addition, Wheeler speculated that "the Texan *E. longi* Wheeler, which is certainly subterranean and has been taken only once (during a nuptial flight), is really a cavernicolous ant." In 1938, however, Wheeler reported the collection of workers of *Spelaeomyrmex urichi* by P. J. Darlington from leafmold in Cuba, thereby casting doubt on the status of the species as a troglobite.

Certainly no more likely troglobite than *S. urichi* has been found among the ants. Further information on its biology has promised to be of exceptional interest. In the course of field work in Trinidad in 1961, the present author undertook to rediscover the species. The first problem was to find the type locality. No fewer than six caves in various parts of the island harbor the guacharo and could correctly be called "Guacharo Cave." The itinerary of the collector, the late Prof. F. M. Urich, was not known. After the author had visited one cave, on the Spring Hill Estate, without success, Dr. David Snow, who was conducting an ecological study of the guacharos, suggested the Oropouche Cave, near Cumaca, as the most likely locality. A single visit to this cave, on April 18, resulted in the immediate finding of two colonies of *Spelaeomyrmex*. Later, a surprising discovery was made: a colony collected from savanna forest at Bernhardsdorp, Surinam, in March 1961 and first identified as *Erebomyrma*, was on second examination determined to be conspecific with *Spelaeomyrmex urichi*. These findings have shed new light on the generic distinctness of

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