THE ANTS OF BELLONA ISLAND

Collections from Bellona are perhaps still too incomplete to allow a critical evaluation of the composition of the fauna. Perhaps the most that can be said is that the majority of both the native and introduced species have been found on Rennell Island also. By far the most distinctive element discovered so far is the monotypic genus *Willowsiella,* described from a single worker from Bellona by WHEELER in 1934. WHEELER has placed *Willowsiella* in the tribe Meranoplini, considering it a distinct, somewhat primitive genus perhaps closest to *Promeranoplus* and *Prodicroaspis* of New Caledonia. If this placement were correct, *Willowsiella* would hold a strikingly anomalous zoogeographic position, since no other meranopline species are known to occur in the main arc of Melanesian islands east of New Guinea. In the opinion of the present author, *Willowsiella* actually belongs in the Tetramoriini. Its entire body form and propodeal spine structure seem to place it not far from *Triglyphothrix* and *Romblonella,* two genera strongly developed in the western Pacific. The unusual shapes of the petiolar and post petiolar nodes can on close examination be seen to be but a slight exaggeration of a morphological trend already apparent in at least one true *Triglyphothrix* species, *T.pacifica* Mann. The light body sculpturing and simple pilosity nevertheless serve to set off *Willowsiella* as distinct from the Indo-Australian *Triglyphothrix,* while the lack of an antennal scrobe distinguishes it from *Romblonella.* Another noteworthy Bellona record, established in the present study, is that of an undetermined *Pheidole (Pheidolacanthinus),* a subgenus hitherto unknown from Rennell.

Below are listed all of the available records of Bellona ants. These include the original records based on the collections of the Templeton Crocker Expedition by WHEELER (1934) and the British Museum collections studied by the present author. Note that the BRADLEYS' label Matahenua refers to the area between Ahanga, on the coast, and the interior village of Matahenua; both localities are at the northwestern end of the island.

Odontomachus simillimus Fr.Smith. Northwestern end of island (Templeton Crocker Exp.).

Willowsiella dispar Wheeler. Northwestern end of island (Templeton Crocker Exp.).

Pheidole (P.) oceanica Mayr. Kapata (E.S.BROWN).

Pheidole (Pheidolacanthinus) sp. A single indeterminate minor worker was collected by E.S.BROWN.

Tetramorium pacificum Mayr. Northwestern end of island (Templeton Crocker Exp.).

Tetramorium melanogyna var. *pallidiventre* Wheeler. Northwestern end of island. "Worker. Differing from the typical *melanogyna* in having the gaster yellow instead of fuscous. The mandibles and legs are of the same yellow color as the gaster, the knees, however, are infuscated. The petiolar and post petiolar nodes are as coarsely reticulate-rugose as the thorax and the marginations are less distinct." No attempt has been made to re-evaluate the status of this form, which was based on a single worker.