



Fig. 1. — Portion of a colony of *Basiceros manni* on their original nest material shortly after capture. Included are workers and larvae, the latter in various stages of growth. Note the remarkable camouflage of the workers.

Abb. 1. — Ein Teil einer Kolonie von *Basiceros manni* im natürlichen Nest. Arbeiterinnen und verschiedene Larvenstadien sind zu sehen. Beachte die bemerkenswerte Schutzfärbung einzelner Arbeiterinnen.

layer by the addition of either cryptically colored chemicals or adhesive substances that hold the soil.

The camouflage is improved still further by the exceptionally sparse and sluggish movements of the ants. When observed in an undisturbed state inside the chambers of an artificial nest, the entire worker force often stands perfectly still for minutes at a time. As illustrated by the data in *table II*, self-grooming is relatively uncommon. The *Basiceros* even hold their antennae rigid most of the time. When workers in motion are disturbed by being uncovered or touched with a pair of forceps, they freeze into immobility for up to several minutes. The overall result is that the ants are exceptionally difficult to distinguish against natural backgrounds.

#### Predation and diet

The *Basiceros manni* proved to be predators of small arthropods. The foraging workers walked with slow, deliberate movements, inspecting crevices and holes by inserting their wedge-shaped heads, sometimes pushing loose debris aside with the head, and antennating the surface. When a prey