

THE ANTS OF JAPEN ISLAND, DUTCH NEW GUINEA (HYM.  
FORMICIDAE)

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THE following paper deals with the ants taken by Miss L. E. Cheesman during her six months' stay on Japen Island, Dutch New Guinea (1938-39).

This island is about 90 miles long, of an attenuated diamond form, the widest part being 14 miles across. The eastern end is only 10 miles distant from the mainland of New Guinea. Miss Cheesman informs me that the formation of Japen consists of a foundation of ancient crystalline rock, with elevated reef mountain ranges, such as Mt. Baduri, and at least one volcanic range—Mt. Eiori.

As far as I am aware, Miss Cheesman is the only naturalist who has collected ants on Japen; certainly no list has been published. Moreover, very little collecting of any sort has been done here; no collectors have been far inland, and the island is unexplored. The ants collected by her are of considerable interest, and quite a number are new to science.

A point that struck me very much during my study of these insects was that in a number of genera the species themselves are larger in size than those of the same genera on the mainland. Miss Cheesman also found this to be the case with the group of Hymenopterous insects she herself specially studied. It is difficult to give any satisfactory explanation of this. It may, however, be suggested that this state of things is the result of very long isolation from the mainland, and less competition in the struggle for life. Furthermore, as pointed out by Miss Cheesman, Japen (and also Waigeu Island) may be part of a very old land system which appears to have existed long before New Guinea emerged from the ocean bed during the Miocene-Pliocene.

The ant-fauna of Japen is typically Papuan.

FORMICIDAE.

PONERINAE Lepeletier.

Ectatommini Emery.

*Rhytidoponera* Mayr.

***Rhytidoponera (Rhytidoponera) gagates* sp. n.**

♂. Jet black, shining, legs and scapes blackish-brown, mandibles, funiculi, sides of scapes, articulations of antennae and legs, coxae, tarsi, lobes and edges of antennal carinae, posterior border of segments, and last segment of gaster reddish; covered with outstanding hairs, or bristles.

*Head* longer than broad, slightly broader in front than behind, cheeks rounded, slightly narrowed behind eyes, occiput truncate, posterior border of head sinuate and narrowly margined, with sharp short posterior angles, posterior portion of vertex slightly excavate in centre and with bluntly rounded posterior angles. Sculpture of head very rugose, with deep shining pits surrounded by a network of sharp raised ridges.

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