

some anatomical differences are cited and a comparison of types will have to be made before a conclusion can be reached.

*Polyrhachis gracilior* Forel

*Polyrhachis furcata* race *gracilior* Forel, 1893: 25, 33. Syntype workers. INDIA: Trevandrum (*H. Ferguson*) and Assam, Sibsagar (*Wood-Mason*) (probably in MNH, Geneva). [Diagnosis in key.]

*Polyrhachis gracilior* Forel, Bingham, 1903: 388 [raised to species].

*Polyrhachis* (*Myrmhopla*) *weberi* Donisthorpe, 1943a: 206. Holotype and paratype workers. INDIA: Travancore, Tenmalai, 500–800 ft., 11–17.x.1938 (BMNH) [examined]. **Syn. n.**

This synonymy is quite straightforward. Donisthorpe was obviously unaware of *gracilior* as in the original description he compares his species to the two closely related species *furcata* F. Smith and *exasperata* F. Smith, but does not mention *gracilior*. Two named specimens of *gracilior* from the Bingham collection (in BMNH) which matched the descriptions of Forel (1893) and Bingham (1903) were compared with the type-series of *weberi* and no significant differences could be found.

*Polyrhachis hector* F. Smith

*Polyrhachis hector* F. Smith, 1857: 62. Holotype worker. SINGAPORE. (*A. R. Wallace*) (UM, Oxford) [examined].

*Polyrhachis abdominalis* F. Smith, 1858a: 63. Holotype worker. BURMA. (BMNH) [examined]. **Syn. n.**

*Polyrhachis mutatus* F. Smith, 1858a: 64 pl. 4 figs. 12, 13. Holotype worker. BURMA. (Type presumed lost). **Syn. n.**

*Polyrhachis malignus* F. Smith, 1858a: 70 pl. 4 fig. 44. Holotype female. PHILIPPINES. (BMNH) [examined]. **Syn. n.**

*Polyrhachis phyllophilus* F. Smith, 1860a: 69. Holotype worker. SULAWESI: Makasar (*A. R. Wallace*). (UM, Oxford) [examined] [the synonymy *abdominalis* = *phyllophilus* by Forel, 1893: 24, 32].

*Polyrhachis achilles* Forel, 1893: 24, 32. Syntype workers. BURMA (*Bingham*). [Diagnosis in key.] [The synonymy *abdominalis* = *achilles* suggested in Bingham, 1903: 398].

*Polyrhachis mutata* race *ajax* Forel, 1893: 24, 32. Holotype (?) worker. BURMA (*Bingham*). [Diagnosis in key.] [The synonymy *mutata* = *ajax* in Bingham, 1903: 399].

Direct comparison shows *abdominalis* to be a synonym of *hector*, and *malignus* has proved to be the female of this species. *P. abdominalis* and *mutata* have traditionally been separated upon grounds of size, length of spines and strength of propodeal margination. Bingham (1903) utilised the presence of short spiniform bristles on the lower tibial margins of the legs as a diagnostic feature of *mutata*, despite the statement by Smith (1858a) that the legs were without spines. However, Bingham did recognise that the development of such spines was variable in *abdominalis* as he says that 'the tibiae in some specimens slightly spinose, in others smooth.' The legs in the type of *abdominalis* are without bristles below and in fact this specimen fits the descriptions of *mutata* just as well as those of *abdominalis*. Finally, series from the Andaman Islands show some specimens with spiniform bristles and some without.

With *hector* one is dealing with a variable species which has a wide distribution and appears capable of developing local populations in different parts of its range. However, these local forms are characterised only by minor differences of colour, spine length, sharpness of propodeal margination and similar features and all such characters are intergradient, often showing variation in different samples from the same area.