



Fig. 10. *Pheidole lokitae* FOREL. Syntype minor worker from Sumatra. Head in dorsal view; integument microsculpture artificially omitted. Drawing by ARMIN CORAY.

I am unable to see sufficiently relevant differences among its species to justify their attribution to different, recognized or recognizable non-related clades.

Since no sure indications for polyphyly are available at the present state of knowledge, the monophyly hypothesis should still be preferred in terms of parsimony.

The same reasoning can be extended from the contemporary members of *Pheidolacanthinus* to the Dominican fossils *Pheidole primigenia* and *tethepa* (see the figures 6 and 11): assuming their monophyly is still much simpler and convincing than assuming a non character-supported homoplastic origin of the pronotal spines. On the contrary, a relationship between the Dominican fossils and some contemporary species is additionally suggested by the eyes, protruding from the sides of the head more than in other *Pheidole*. I consider the Malayan and Sumatran contemporary *Pheidole lokitae* represented here in Figs. 10 and 11 as the most closely related species to both fossils, *primigenia* and *tethepa*.

I believe, in addition, that many of the arguments about the true or presumed polyphyly of the subgenus *Pheidolacanthinus* are irrelevant to the relationships between the Dominican fossils and the extant Old World species. The ambiguity stems from an incorrect way of posing the problem. I have already said that since there is no known character supporting the hypothesis of an independent origin for the pronotal spines in the amber fossils and in some of the Old World species mentioned above, then regarding this character as homologous appears to be the easiest solution. The correct question to be posed is whether this character is shared among the taxa discussed in this paper by symplesiomorphy or by synapomorphy. This cannot be decided in a satisfactory way on the currently available information; the acceptance of the one or of the other alternative is destined to affect the retention or the rejection of *Pheidolacanthinus* as a valid subgenus. I shall show in the next chapter