

C B A 7 4 2 1 7 4 2 1 7 4 2 1 7 4 2 1 7 4 2 1 7 4 2 1 7 4 2 1 7 4 2 1

RHOPTROMYRMEX OPACUS, new synonymy of, and
brief characterization

By William L. Brown, Jr.
Department of Entomology
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York, USA

Pilot Register of Zoology
Card No. 15
Issued 20 May 1964.

Insecta: Hymenoptera: Formicidae

Rhoptromyrmex opacus Emery, in Forel, 1909, Ann. Soc. ent. Belg., 53: 59, nota, worker. Type locality "Kamerun" Types in Museo Civico di Storia Naturale, Genoa (and elsewhere), examined 1963.
Rhoptromyrmex opacus var. esta Forel, 1909, Ann. Soc. ent. Belg., 53: 59, worker, female, male. Type locality "Bas Congo." Types in Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Geneva (and elsewhere), examined 1963. New synonymy.

Rhoptromyrmex opacus var. laeviceps Santschi, 1916, Ann. Soc. ent. Fr., 84: 504, worker. Type locality Boma, Congo. Type in Naturhistorisches Museum, Basel, examined 1963. New synonymy.

Rhoptromyrmex opacus subsp. monodi Bernard, 1952, Mem. Inst. fr. Afr. noire, 19 (1): 251, fig. 14F, worker. Type locality Ziéla, Mt. Nimba area, Guinea. Location of unique type unknown, but was to have been deposited in Muséum Nationale d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; possibly still in the possession of Prof. Bernard. Not seen. Provisional new synonymy.

Worker with predominantly fine, opaque reticulate-punctulate sculpture over head and alitrunk; in some smaller specimens, the cephalic sculpture may be more shallow and more nearly shining. Metanotal groove present, moderately to deeply impressed. Petiolar node moderate in height, with broadly rounded summit; postpetiole subglobular, slightly wider than petiolar node and wider than long, its ventral surface without a prominent rounded process or tumulus. Color dull yellow to brownish-orange; according to Bernard, the type of subsp. monodi has the occiput and alitrunk blackish-brown.

Female microgynous, no larger than the largest worker and smaller than the male, slender. Mandibles tending towards a falcate form; masticatory margins curved, oblique, leaving a large interspace; apical two teeth large and sharp, others are only small denticles. Propodeum evenly and gently convex in profile, without any trace of teeth. Petiole somewhat compressed, with a convex keel beneath; postpetiole with a prominent, rounded anteroventral process. Head with spaced rugae making a mainly longitudinal pattern. Rest of body predominantly smooth, shining; gaster with small but conspicuous punctures from which arise fairly long, mostly reclinate hairs. Color dark brown.

Male a little larger than the largest workers. Mandibles more or less like those of female, opposable; antennae with 9 segments, but former segmentation of long fusion segment is visible in some specimens. Petiole clavate, its node not very distinctly set off. Head above with sculpture much as in worker, sculpture otherwise predominantly smooth and shining. Gaster larger than in female, with prominent genitalia. Color as in female.

Distribution: Central and West Africa in higher-rainfall areas; sporadic. Records for samples in the Museum of Comparative Zoology and the California Academy of Science as follows: Thysville, Congo (J. C. Bequaert). 50 km s. of Tahela, Congo, and km 94 on Kavumu-Walikale Route, 900 m, Congo (E. S. Ross and R. E. Leech).

Biology: According to the collector, the Thysville sample came from a populous nest in sandy soil in savanna.

Synonymy: The types of var. esta are unremarkable specimens of opacus; the laeviceps type is just a small individual with allometrically shallow head sculpture. The figures of subsp. monodi in the original description, especially that of the propodeum (fig. 14F), is particularly puzzling, especially since that purporting to be R. opacus on the same page (fig. 14E) bears no resemblance to the propodeum of workers of that species in my experience. I am accepting Bernard's opinion that the form belongs to opacus. It appears to be a dark variant.

L1
L2
L3
L4
L5
L6
L7
L8
L9
L10
L11
L12
L13
L14
L15
L16
L17
L18
L19
L20
L21
L22
L23
L24
L25
L26
L27
L28
L29

A89690X
R1
R2
R3
R4
R5
R6
R7
R8
R9
R10
R11
R12
R13
R14
R15
R16
R17
R18
R19
R20
R21
R22
R23
R24
R25
R26
R27
R28
R29

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11 B12 B13 B14 B15 B16 B17 B18 B19 B20 B21 B22 B23 B24 B25 B26 B27 B28 B29 B30 B31 B32