RHOPTRORYMEX WROUGHTONII, new synonymy of, and brief characterization

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Insecta: Hymenoptera: Formicidae


Tetramorium rothneyi Bingham, 1903, Fauna Brit. India, Hym. 2: 177, worker.


Worker: Varying markedly by locality in width of head, petiole and postpetiole; in length and form of propodeal teeth; in distinctness of promesonal sutures; and in a tendency toward reduction of either the fine reticulate sculpture or the superimposed longitudinal costulae (rugulae). The commonest and most widespread and constant form is the one that usually received the name "rothneyi." This has the head and alitrunk densely reticulopunctate and opaque, overlain with conspicuous longitudinal rugulae that are most numerous on the head, where they typically form a broad, more or less crowded band of longitudinal costulae filling the space between the frontal carinae, and often extend to the sides of the head as well; the alitrunk also frequently with well-developed rugulae. The propodeal teeth of this form may vary from short and triangular to moderately long and more or less spiniform.

In the extreme "sumatrensis" form of the Sumatran highlands, the propodeal spines are very long, and the cephalic rugulae are rather widely spaced, approaching in these respects the Melanesian species R. melleus. At the other extreme is the type series of R. wroughtonii, from western peninsular India; this form has the fine reticulate sculpture reduced, so that the interrugular spaces of the head, plus areas of the alitrunk, are definitely shining. This series also has short propodeal teeth, some of them nearly rectangular, and some varying markedly bilaterally in the same individual.

Petiolar node high and rounded apically; postpetiole with a rounded anteroventral process of varying distinctness, in most samples well-developed.

Female unknown; male not studied.

Distribution: Widespread in southeastern Asia, extending to southern peninsular India and northwestern to Yunnan and the Red Basin of western Szechuan, probably occurring widely in southern China; Philippines; Formosa; Hainan Island; Indonesia west to Sumba; base of Cape York Peninsula, northern Queensland. Localities for material examined in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University: India: R. wroughtonii types, Kanara (Wroughton).


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