

M. R. Smith - 1939

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Falconer Smith

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PONERA
oblongiceps n.sp.

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A NEW SPECIES OF NORTH AMERICAN *PONERA*, WITH AN
ERGATANDROUS FORM (HYMENOPTERA : FORMICIDAE).

By MARION R. SMITH,

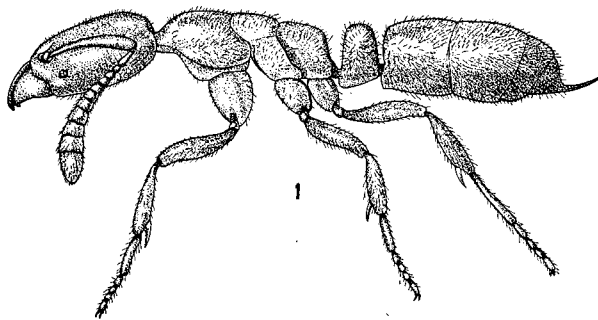
Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

In a previous article entitled "Ants of the Genus *Ponera* in America, North of Mexico" (Ann. Ent. Soc. Amer., Vol. 29, pp. 420-430, 1936) I dealt with the taxonomy, biology, and distribution of the five known North American species. Recently A. B. Gurney, of this Bureau, has collected in a sawdust pile at Priest Bridge, Md., a species of *Ponera* which can not be assigned to any of those discussed in my article. Among the specimens are workers, queens, and ergataners, but no males. The ergataner is characterized by its exceedingly large, subrectangular head, 13-segmented antennae, extremely small eyes, and the deep, broad mesoepinotal constriction. The possibility that the species might be new was increased by the fact that only four species and one variety are known to have ergatandrous forms, namely, *opaciceps* Mayr, *eduardi* Forel, *ergatandria* Forel, *punctatissima* Roger, and *ragusai* var. *santschii* Emery, and only two of these, *opaciceps* and *ergatandria*, are known to occur in North America. The new ergataner differs from those of *ergatandria* and *punctatissima* in having 13-segmented antennae, and from those of *opaciceps* and *eduardi* in possessing dentate mandibles, and an antennal scape much longer than funicular segments 1 to 4 combined, but it bears a close similarity to the description and figure of the ergataner of *santschii*. I therefore sent specimens of workers, queens, and an ergataner to Carlo Menozzi of Italy, who very kindly compared these with Emery's type of *santschii*. He stated, however, that the Maryland species and *santschii* can not possibly be the same because of the difference in the number of segments in the maxillary palpus of the worker, the former having two segments, and *santschii* one segment. Although an ergataner was sent Menozzi, no comment was made. His opinion after a very careful study was that my specimens represent a new form very closely allied to *ergatandria*. I take the liberty of quoting his remarks as follows: "I find your *Ponera* is allied to *ergatandria*, from which one can distinguish it as a species or subspecies by the head being a little narrower, with sculpture less impressed, the scape of the antenna, and the scale of the petiole thicker; furthermore the pubescence of the new species is coarser than that of *P. ergatandria*."

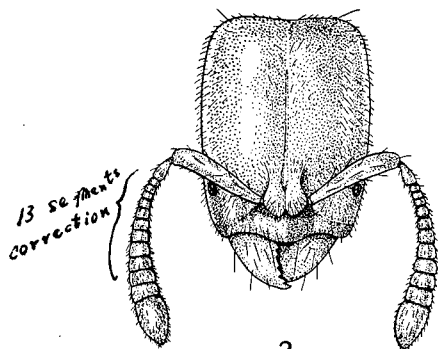
***Ponera oblongiceps*, sp. nov.**

Worker (Plate 12, fig. 1).¹—Length, 2.2-2.4 mm.

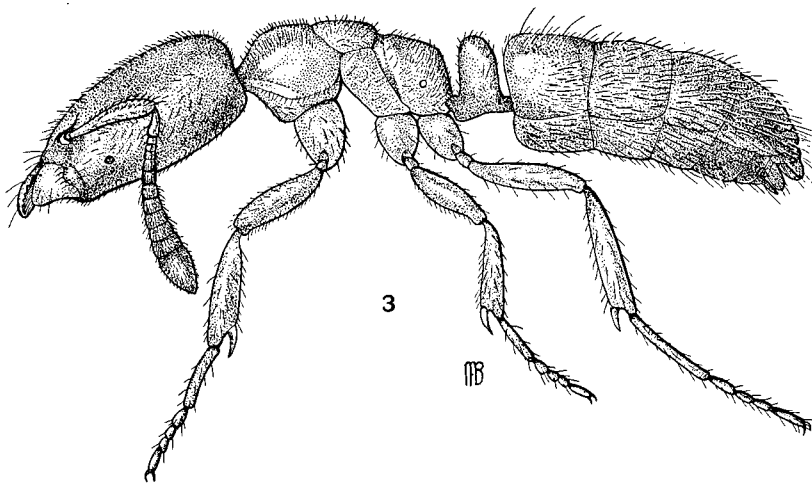
¹The drawings accompanying this paper are by Mary F. Benson of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine.



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Head, excluding mandibles, approximately one-third longer than broad, posterior border faintly emarginate, sides gently convex, thus giving a subparallel effect. Antennal scape extending to the posterior nine-tenths of the head, exclusive of the mandibles; first funicular segment approximately as long as the three succeeding segments taken together, the last funicular segment exceeding in length the two preceding segments taken together. Eye extremely small, circular, apparently with only 1 to 3 ommatidia. Thorax with well defined promesonotal and mesoepinotal sutures, the suture separating the mesopleura from the mesonotum distinct in some specimens, indistinct in others; mesoepinotum with a rather strong constriction which is well defined laterally; base of epinotum and the declivital surface meeting in a distinct, obtuse angle. Petiole viewed laterally thick anteroposteriorly, slightly thinner above than below, with convex anterior surface and flattened posterior surface, dorsal surface blunt; petiole viewed posteriorly rounded from side to side; ventral surface with a prominent, rounded tubercle. Gaster of the usual shape; first two segments occupying more than half the surface.

Body rather shining in spite of the dense pubescence which covers its surface; mandibles glabrous, with coarse, sparse punctures; punctation of head not clearly discernible except under high magnification.

Hairs grayish, suberect to erect, sparse, but especially noticeable on the clypeus and the pygidium of the gaster.

Yellowish brown; mandibles, thoracic sutures, and the gaster more infuscated.

Ergataner (Plate 12, figs. 2, 3).—Length 3.1–3.3 mm.

Head, excluding mandibles, large, subrectangular, one-fifth longer than broad, posterior border very faintly emarginate, sides gently convex, subparallel; anterior border of head slightly narrower than posterior border. Antenna 13-segmented; antennal scape exceedingly short, extending only three-fifths the length of the head, when the mandibles are not included; funiculus gradually enlarging from base to apex. Eye extremely small, circular, with 1 to 3 ommatidia. Thorax smaller and distinctly narrower than the head; promesonotal and mesoepinotal sutures distinct; a deep, broad constriction in the region of the mesoepinotum, clearly setting the mesonotum apart from the epinotum. Epinotum and petiole similar to those of the worker. Gaster with 5 distinct segments in addition to the terminal, male genital appendages.

Color, pubescence, and pilosity as in the worker.

Queen.—Length 2.9–3 mm.

Head similar in shape to that of the worker. Vertex with 3 ocelli arranged in an almost equilateral triangle. Antennal scape, when fully extended, slightly surpassing the anterior ocellus. Anterior border of the compound eye almost touching the posterior border of the clypeus. Dorsal border of the petiole narrower anteroposteriorly than that of the worker. Wings hyaline, with pale-yellowish veins.

Body rather smooth and shining, although covered by dense pubescence. Pilosity similar to that of the worker.

Black; mandibles, clypeus, antennae, legs, and tip of gaster reddish brown.

Described from 47 workers, 3 ergataners, and 15 queens, all of which were collected at Priest Bridge, Md., by A. B. Gurney. These cotypes are in the United States National Museum.