

## Clarence Bicknell and *Iridomyrmex bicknelli*

By Graham Avery – March 2016

The ant species *Iridomyrmex bicknelli* is widely distributed in Australia. It was first described in 1898 by Carlo Emery (1848-1925), Professor of Zoology at the University of Bologna, who in his article on 'new species of Malayan and Australian ants' ("Descrizioni di formiche nuove malesi e australiane") described and illustrated 20 species. Most of these were identified by Emery as new species (or varieties), to which accordingly he gave names.



Emery's article explains that his specimens of these ants came from various sources:

- specimens of 7 species from the explorer Fruhstorfer, to whom he dedicated *Polyrachis Fruhstorfferi*
- specimens of 3 species from the naturalist Tepper in Australia, to whom he dedicated *Myrmecia Tepperi*
- specimens of 3 species from Clarence Bicknell, to whom he dedicated *Iridomyrmex bicknelli*
- he had received these specimens from Bicknell via the botanist Mattiolo, to whom he dedicated *Iridomyrmex Mattiolo*

For information on Emery, Fruhstorfer, Tepper and Mattiolo see the Appendix below.

Concerning the specimens received from Bicknell, Emery writes:

- *Iridomyrmex Mattiolo* (page 232) 'Tasmania. Dal Sig. Clarence Bicknell. Dedico la specie al chiaro collega Prof. O. Mattiolo alle cui premure devo le formiche tasmaniensi descritte in queste pagine' (Tasmania. From Mr Clarence Bicknell. I dedicate the species to my distinguished colleague Prof. O. Mattiolo to whose kindness I owe the Tasmanian ants described in these pages)
- *Iridomyrmex bicknelli* (page 236) 'Tasmania. Dedico questa specie al Sig. Clarence Bicknell, a cui devo questa e altri formiche di quell'isola' (Tasmania. I dedicate this species to Mr Clarence Bicknell, to whom I owe this and other ants from that island)
- *Rhytidoponera metallica* (page 232) 'Tasmania. Ebbi parecchi esemplari di questa formica dal Sig. Clarence Bicknell, per mezzo del Prof. O. Mattiolo' (Tasmania. I had several specimens of this ant from Mr Clarence Bicknell, through Prof. O. Mattiolo)

Thus we know that Bicknell's ant specimens were passed to Emery by the botanist Mattiolo, Emery's colleague at Bologna; we may suppose that Mattiolo was known to Bicknell through their mutual interest in botany. But we do not know how Bicknell obtained the ants, and the question of whether he himself went to Tasmania remains open.

Sources:

Article on *Iridomyrmex bicknelli*, with images and distribution map

[http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Iridomyrmex\\_bicknelli](http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Iridomyrmex_bicknelli)

Article on *Iridomyrmex*, with description of all its species including *Iridomyrmex bicknelli*

[http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/images/a/ab/Heterick\\_%26\\_Shattuck.pdf](http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/images/a/ab/Heterick_%26_Shattuck.pdf)

Text of 'Descrizioni di formiche nuove malesi e australiane' by Carlo Emery (1898)

[http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/images/a/aa/Emery\\_1898.pdf](http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/images/a/aa/Emery_1898.pdf)

## Appendix

List of persons mentioned:

**Carlo Emery** (1848-1925) was Professor of Zoology at the University of Bologna from 1881; he devoted his career almost entirely to the study of ants, on which he published extensively (270 publications). His name is famous in the annals of entomology.

Source [http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Emery,\\_Carlo\\_\(1848-1925\)](http://www.antwiki.org/wiki/Emery,_Carlo_(1848-1925))

**Hans Fruhstorfer** (1866-1922) was a German explorer, insect trader and entomologist who travelled widely in the Americas and Oceania. He collected and described new species of exotic butterflies; in taxonomy he made extensive use of the structure of the male genitalia.

Source [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Fruhstorfer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Fruhstorfer)

**Johann Gottlieb Otto Tepper** (1841-1923) was a botanist, schoolteacher and entomologist, employed by the South Australian Museum in Adelaide from 1883 to 1911 (his family had emigrated from Prussia for religious reasons in 1847).

Source <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tepper-johann-gottlieb-otto-13215>

**Oreste Mattiolo** (1856-1947) was Professor of Botany & Director of the Botanical Garden at Bologna from 1894 to 1900; he occupied the same posts at Torino from 1900 to 1932. He was President of the Società Botanica Italiana.

Source [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oreste\\_Mattiolo](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oreste_Mattiolo)

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/oreste-mattiolo\\_\(Dizionario\\_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/oreste-mattiolo_(Dizionario_Biografico)/)