

curved toward the apex of the segment. Pronotum with a pair of long, standing, slightly clavate humeral hairs; anterior mesonotum with a pair of slightly shorter, clavate ones; dorsum of the alitrunk with sparse, appressed, coarse pubescence especially on the pronotum. Petiole with a pair of clavate hairs on the back of the node; postpetiole with 3 pairs of clavate hairs: one pair short, decumbent, antero-medial ones and two pairs close to the articulation with the gaster, the mid pair longer. Gastral tergites with regularly arranged, scattered, long, somewhat subdecumbent, clavate hairs; sternites and gastral apex with several decumbent to subdecumbent simple hairs. Pubescence quite long and abundant on the appendages only.

Colour testaceous.

Paratypes (2 workers). TL 3.6, HL 0.96-0.98, HW 0.69, CI 70-72, ML 0.50, MI 51-52, SL 0.60-0.61, SI 87-88, PW 0.39-0.40, AL 0.90-0.92.

Closely matching the description of the holotype, even for the presence of the minute intercalary denticle on the right mandibular fork.

Holotype (worker): ETHIOPIA, Ilubador Region, Buno Bedele: nr. Bedele, (approx. 8°27' N – 36°21' E), 2000 m ca., 29/31.VII.2002 A. Sforzi & L. Bartolozzi *legit*, sifting leaf litter of secondary forest (MZUF).

Paratypes: 2 workers with the same data as the holotype (MSNM; BMNH).

*Derivatio nominis.* This species is dedicated to Alessandra Sforzi (MZUF), one of the collector of this new ant.

*Comment.* An easily recognisable species for its unarmed left mandibular shaft and the presence of an intercalary tooth on the left mandibular fork. It is quite different from any other Afrotropical *Strumigenys* known to date and may constitute a species-group of its own.

*Strumigenys alessandrae*-group contains *Strumigenys alessandrae* n. sp. only and may be defined from the following combination of characters:

- 1) Apical fork of the left mandible with an intercalary tooth, right mandible with just a vestigial intercalary denticle. Preapical teeth absent from the left mandible; the right mandible has one preapical tooth close to the insertion of the apicodorsal one.
- 2) Scape slender and simple. SI 87-88.
- 3) Upper scrobe margin weakly developed.
- 4) Postoral and preocular notches deeply incised; the latter runs ventrally, bends backward at a right angle and fades away along the median suture.
- 5) Spongiform appendages relatively well developed on postpetiole; but reduced to a collar on the posterior face of the petiolar node. First gastral sternite devoid of any spongiform structure.
- 6) Apicoscrobial hair absent. Cephalic dorsum with appressed, narrowly spoon-shaped hairs only. Pronotal humeral hair present, clavate. Mesonotum with a single pair of clavate hairs. Petiole, postpetiole and gaster with standing clavate hairs.