Key words: Afrotropical; key to species; Tetramorinii; *T. edouardi* complex; *T. muralti* complex; *T. weitzeckeri* complex; revision

Introduction

The ant genus *Tetramorium* Mayr, 1855 is with over 430 described species (Bolton 1995; Barry Bolton, pers. communication) one of the most species-rich genera worldwide. It is found in the Afrotropical, Malagasy, Palaearctic, Oriental, and Indo-Australian zoogeographical regions, and with few, mostly non-native, species also in the New World (Brown 1957; Bolton 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980). However, its main diversity is certainly centred in the Afrotropical region with over 220 described species (Bolton 1976, 1980, 1985, 1995; Hita Garcia *et al*. 2010). The taxonomic foundation for this zoogeographic region is relatively good, mainly because of Bolton's (1976, 1980, 1985) modern revisionary studies on the genus.

The *Tetramorium weitzeckeri* species group was established by Bolton (1979, 1980), and occurs in the Afrotropical and Malagasy zoogeographical regions. Previous to this study the species group contained 14 species in the Afrotropical (Bolton 1980; Hita Garcia *et al*. 2010) and 5 in the Malagasy regions (1979). Most of the species are well defined, although, the species status of some species, e.g. *Tetramorium edouardi* Forel and *Tetramorium weitzeckeri* Emery, was noted as uncertain in Bolton (1980). However, scarcity of material available for examination hindered a better taxonomic resolution of these problematical species at that time.

Generally, most ant diversity studies in the Afrotropics were carried out after 1980 (Belshaw & Bolton 1994; Robertson 1999, 2002; Watt *et al*. 2002; Fisher 2004; Deblauwe & Dekoninck 2007; Yanoviak *et al*. 2007; Hita Garcia *et al*. 2009), and this has lead to an accumulation of indeterminable *Tetramorium* material that does not key out properly using the existing keys (Bolton 1976, 1980). In some cases the reason might be that distribution ranges and intraspecific variability of known species need to be adjusted, though it might more often be the case that undescribed material is involved. During this study we found around 120 potentially undescribed *Tetramorium* species located in the Hymenoptera collections of the Natural History Museum, London, the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, and the Zoological Research Museum Koenig, Bonn. Against this background it is not exaggerated to expect significantly more than 340 or more *Tetramorium* species for the whole Afrotropical region. Taking all this into consideration, the genus *Tetramorium* in the Afrotropical zoogeographical region is in great need of an updated taxonomic analysis.

With this study we provide a taxonomic revision of the *T. weitzeckeri* species group for the Afrotropical zoogeographic region. It takes account of a large amount of new material generated by several modern ant inventories and incorporates it into the existing taxonomic system based on Bolton (1980).

Abbreviations of depositories

The collection abbreviations follow Bolton (1980), Evenhuis (2009), and Bolton (pers. communication). The material on which this study is based was examined from and deposited in the following institutions:

BBRC	Barry Bolton Reference Collection, Isle of Wight, U.K.
BMNH	The Natural History Museum (British Museum, Natural History), London, U.K.
CASC	California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California, U.S.A.
IEB	Institute of Entomology, University of Bologna, Italy
FMNH	Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, U.S.A.
MCSN	Museo Civico di Storia Naturale Giacomo Doria, Genoa, Italy
MCZ	Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
MHNG	Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Geneva, Switzerland
MNHN	Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France