

and parallel propodeal teeth. Lateral borders of declivous face of propodeum carinate, without prominent infradental lamellae; concave when seen in profile.

Petiole (Fig. 12) strongly pendunculate in front, but the peduncle is shorter than the following, trunk-shaped, sharply differentiated node; the latter has the anterior surface perpendicular to the transversely convex and longitudinally nearly straight dorsal surface; the latter, seen from above, distinctly longer than broad; postero-lateral spongiform appendages absent; ventral surface of petiole with a low, sagittal carina, lacking a prominent spongiform crest. Post-petiole dorsally with an extremely narrow anterior and a somewhat broader posterior spongiform border, the lateral borders bare, without spongiform frames; ventro-lateral spongiform appendages moderately developed, deeply excavate on sides (Fig. 12). Gaster with a narrow subspongiform anterior border on tergum I; sternum I bearing anteriorly a moderately developed transverse pad of spongiform hairs.

TYPE. COSTA RICA: Rio Toro Amarillo vic. Guapiles, 26 Feb.-9 Mar. 1966, W. L. Brown leg. 1 worker (MCZ; holotype).

DISCUSSION

On account of the completely sculptured and opaque sides of thorax and post-petiole disc, the (probable) absence of a toothless diastema on chewing border of mandibles, the absence of spongiform appendages on petiole and the reduction of the same on postpetiole, *microthrix* has its closest relatives among the *schulzi*-group in the Neotropical *Smithistruma* fauna. It differs, however, rather conspicuously from all species of the aforesaid group by the following combination of characters: Nearly total absence of long, erect, simple or elaborate hairs, the ones present on gaster have their apex not thickened nor flattened; the reduction of the ground pilosity to

minute hairs, visible only at very high magnification; the larger size and greater head length; the head shape, above all the more suddenly expanded occiput and the rather depressed head; the longer mandibles.

Among the members of the *schulzi*-group, *microthrix* is closest to *margaritae* with which it shares the absence of infradental lamellae on sides of declivous face of pronotum, which are only carinate, but from which it differs in the following characters: ground pilosity of head, thorax and gaster minute, inconspicuous; erect hairs present on gaster; fringing hairs of clypeus and leading edge of scape broadly spatulate; absence of a metanotal groove and suture; shorter propodeal spines; longer petiolar node; entirely smooth and shining tergum I of gaster.

The peculiar shape of the head, which is also more strongly depressed than in the other species, and the elongate petiolar node reminds one of the aberrant *depressiceps*, from which *microthrix* differs rather strikingly by the absence of bristling, long, standing hairs on head, thorax, pedicel and legs, by the less rounded anterior border of clypeus which forms an angle with the lateral borders, by the spatulate fringing hairs of clypeus and leading edge of scape, and by the less extremely depressed head.

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