



FIG. 5. Male genital capsules of three species of *Acromyrmex* (Moellerius), *A. landolti*, *A. fracticornis* and *A. striatus*.

World tropics, which have failed to document faunal similarity, and which support the theory of long-distance dispersal of the flora, notably of the genera *Prosopis* and *Larrea*, but not of the fauna<sup>30, 40, 51</sup>.

It is dubious that the taxa of *Acromyrmex* (Moellerius) are dependent upon the plant genera *Prosopis* and *Larrea*, due to their harvesting behavior, the nature of their fungus gardens, and general tendency to harvest grasses. Even though *A. (M.) versicolor* relies heavily upon these plant genera<sup>27</sup>, this behavior was probably derived. A common paleoecologic origin of the plant and ant taxa is a more likely explanation for contemporary biogeographic patterns. Indeed, zones of late Pleistocene caatinga in South America<sup>3</sup> are congruent with the contemporary distribution of the taxa of *Acromyrmex* (Moellerius) (Fig. 6).

Difficulties arise in explaining the disjunct distribution of *A. (M.) versicolor* from the other taxa. The absence of any related taxa in Central America and most of Mexico suggests that, if dispersal occurred via islands of suitable caatinga vegetation during the Pleistocene, then the subsequent reduction of these enclaves occurred in such a manner that endemism could not be supported, and these hypothetical taxa of intermediate taxonomic status became extinct. It could also be argued that the presence of *A. (M.) versicolor* in Northern Mexico and the southwestern United States resulted from an exceptionally long-distance dispersal, which seems highly improbable. It is possible that uncollected taxa occur in Central America, but due to the conspicuousness of these ants, as well as the absence of large areas of appropriate habitat, this possibility also seems improbable. Further biogeographic and systematic work is obviously needed to explain this most interesting distributional pattern.