

The Ants (Formicidae), and some Myrmecophiles, of Sicily.

By HORACE DONISTHORPE, F.Z.S., F.E.S., etc.

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Strongylognathus destefanii, Emery.—Up to now only a single specimen (the type, a female) of this ant had been taken. I was fortunate enough to find three colonies, as well as a single ♀. On April 6th, I took a single dealated ♀, which was by itself under a stone at Taormina. On April 12th I discovered a strong mixed colony of *S. destefanii* and *Tetramorium ferox* v. *diomedaea*, at Taormina. It was situated under a stone on the hill side, but extended some distance both sides in the stony ground. I should say about 80% of the ♂♂ were *Tetramorium*. The nest was very difficult to dig up, and much time and labour failed to disclose females of either species. Another similar mixed colony was found on the other side of Taormina on April 20th. The ants were under a small stone, but extended widely in the very stony hard ground. In this nest four specimens of the beetle *Dichillus pertusus* were present. Finally on April 22nd, I found a mixed colony of the *Strongylognathus* and *Aphaenogaster semipolita*! I cannot explain this, but the fact remains, and no amount of digging produced a single *Tetramorium*.

Different forms of the genus *Strongylognathus* (of which there are four species, six subspecies, and two varieties, known) have occurred in Algeria, Tunis, Spain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Sicily, Caucasus, Urals, and Central Russia, and have always been found associating with forms of *Tetramorium caespitum*. They possess sickle-shaped jaws similar to those of the true slave-makers *Polyergus*, but have been called degenerate slave-makers, as they appear to have mostly lost the power of making slave raids. Unlike most parasitic ants the female of both host and guest live side by side in the nest. The *Tetramorium* workers bring up males, females, and workers of the *Strongylognathus*, but only rear their own workers. Wasmann suggested that these mixed colonies were founded jointly by a female of each species, but Wheeler rather thinks that the *Strongylognathus* female enters a *Tetramorium* colony after it has already been established. This latter view is perhaps borne out by the finding of solitary *Strongylognathus* females. Such a female is probably waiting near a *Tetramorium* colony, for an opportunity to enter its nest.

As the worker of *Strongylognathus destefanii* is undescribed, I have drawn up the following description of the same:—

♀ *Yellow, shining; antennae, vertex of head, and gaster a little darker (more shining and of a brighter yellow than in S. huberi, Emery.), with somewhat long erect hairs (slightly longer than in S. huberi) on head and whole body.*

HEAD: broader in comparison to its length than in *huberi*; mandibles long and strong, sharply pointed and very finely striated; clypeus and frontal area smooth and shining; rest of head almost smooth, with fairly large widely separated punctures, and with faint striae on cheeks and temples; antennae rather long, scape slender, funiculus with a rather large, well-marked, 3-jointed club.

THORAX: pronotum and mesonotum smooth and shining; sides of mesothorax and epinotum longitudinally striate; epinotum armed with two short, sharp teeth.

PETIOLE with node high; post-petiole transverse (much more so than in *huberi*) and lower than petiole, both petiole and post-petiole broader than in *huberi*; gaster apparently smooth and shining, but very finely transversely striate.

LONG 3.5-3.8mm.