

Again, both characters seem to be variable at genus-group level, and possibly even at higher taxonomic levels within the Formicinae. They seem to be congruent with certain alitrunk configurations (the *Lasius* configuration with a short metanotum-propodeum and the propodeum often truncated; the *Formica* configuration with an elongate metanotum-propodeum and a domed propodeum). Within the Formicinae round spiracles are the predominant form. Slit-shaped spiracles are restricted to some *Melophorus*, *Camponotus*, all Formicini and some others. However, at genus level and for the purposes of this paper, they separate both *Formica* and *Lasius* quite reliably.

Conclusion

The characters described above not only clearly separate ants of the genera *Formica* and *Lasius* (see newly proposed couplet below) but also have some phylogenetic implications. The gastral reflexion system, the bristles on the hind tibiae, and the construction of the frontal carinae, are all characters at genus-group level. Their use in separating these two genera thus indicates that both genera must belong to two different genus-groups or tribes. Even recently some authors (e.g. Wheeler & Wheeler, 1985) listed *Formica* and *Lasius* within the single tribe Formicini. This seems incorrect and due to reliance on overall habitus similarity, which does not indicate real relationships. A phylogenetic analysis of the Formicini and a discussion of its possible sister-group (Lasiini) is not the aim of this study, but will be presented in a later publication (Agosti, in prep).

New couplet for workers

- First gastral segment of *Formica* configuration (Fig. 1). Propodeal spiracles slit-shaped to oval, if the latter then the inner margin of the annular sclerite not parallel to the outer (Fig. 15); spiracle located far in front of the posterior propodeal margin (Fig. 17). Hind tibiae with a double row of distinct bristles (Fig. 9), never thickly pubescent. Ventral surface of petiole keeled (Fig. 6). Frontal carinae beginning at the front of the torulus, close to the posterior margin of the clypeus (Fig. 11); each forming a distinct sharp ridge in section (Fig. 12). In ventral view the hind coxae meeting medially (Fig. 5). Cavity of the petiolar insertion in the metasternum at most reaching the midlength of the metacoxal cavities, never projecting forward beyond the level of the metacoxal cavities (Fig. 3). ***Formica***
- First gastral segment of *Lasius* configuration (Fig. 2). Propodeal spiracles round (Fig. 16) to weakly ovate, if the latter then the inner and outer margins of the annular sclerite parallel; spiracle located close to the posterior propodeal margin (Fig. 18). Hind tibiae without a double row of bristles