

Alto del Flumendosa near Stazione di Villagrande, ca. 800m, 5.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.; Prov. Nuoro, ca. 5 km W Seùlo, 700-800m, 6.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.

OTHER INVESTIGATED MATERIAL: Sardinia, Sorgono, 14.III.1913, collector not given, 3♀♀ (MCG), mislabeled as *T. brevicorne*.

This comparatively distinct species has never been involved in the huge taxonomic difficulties concerning the Palaearctic *Tetramorium*, since females and workers bear an unmistakable transversal striation on the occiput. However, as found out by López (1988), in a minority of workers from some colonies this feature is absent, making them look very similar to *T. semilaeve*. Hints of transversal rugosity may also be traced on the heads of single workers in some other species, including *T. semilaeve* (we have two such samples from Sardinia; see also López, 1988). The investigation of larger samples from the same colony is recommended in such cases. Females differ strongly from *T. semilaeve* in having the petiolar nodes enlarged (though not quite as much as in *T. diomedaeum*: Figs. 9, 10). Differentiation in electromorphs at the investigated loci is of low value for species identification (Tab. 4 pag. 333).

*T. meridionale* shows a patchy distribution in the Mediterranean region. Records are so far available from the Spanish mainland, the Balears (López, 1988; Tinaut, 1989; Schulz, unpubl.), southern France and Corsica (Bondroit, 1918; Casewitz-Weulersse, 1990). There are also scattered reports of the species from localities in eastern Europe and the Middle East which appear highly doubtful. In Italy, *T. meridionale* has been quoted from Sardinia, most islands of the Tuscanian Archipelago and few localities on the mainland (Emery, 1916; Baroni Urbani, 1971; Le Moli & Rosi, 1991; Schulz, unpubl.). The southernmost records stem from Sambiase di Calabria (Menozzi, 1921) and the island of Pantelleria (Mei, 1995), but no record from Sicily is presently at hand. On the mainland the species is generally both local and rare. Interestingly, it is much more common and evenly distributed on some islands of the Mediterranean, dominating over *T. semilaeve* in Sardinia and Elba in many places (Sanetra, unpubl.). Explanations for this peculiar distribution pattern are not yet known. As a striking biological feature *T. meridionale* displays a marked polygyny: up to ten queens were extracted from some colonies of Sardinia and Elba.

*Tetramorium semilaeve* André, 1883 [Figs. 3, 7]

*Tetramorium caespitum* var. *semilaeve* André, 1883

*Tetramorium semilaeve* André: de Dalla Torre, 1893

*Tetramorium semilaeve* André v. *siciliense* Santschi, 1927: **syn. nov.**

COLLECTING DATA:

**Sardinia** - Prov. Sassari, Fiume Coghinis, ca. 8 km NE Perfugas, ca. 100m, 2.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.; Prov. Nuoro, ca. 5 km S Bitti, ca. 600m, 4.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.; Prov. Nuoro, road N. 125 Dorgali-Baunei, ca. 13 km NW Punta Genna Coggina, 800-900m, 4.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.; Prov. Nuoro, Lago Alto del Flumendosa, near Stazione di Villagrande, ca. 800m, 5.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.;

**Sicily** - Prov. Catania, Acireale, 30m, 29.V.1993, M. Sanetra leg.; Prov. Catania, ca. 5 km W Ramacca, ca. 400m, 10.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.; Prov. Catania, M. Etna, ca. 5 km N Ragalna 1000-1200m, 12.V.1994, M. Sanetra leg.; Prov. Siracusa, 5 km NE Canicattini Bagni, ca. 300m,