

1971). Such a species composition, sometimes including *T. meridionale* as additional element, appears characteristic for the northern Mediterranean region.

The Italian *Tetramorium* fauna as a whole is nearly complete with the species treated in this work for the southern part of the country. A recent survey of the ant fauna of the Pelagian Islands and Pantelleria in the channel between Sicily and Tunisia indicated North African affinities (Mei, 1995). Additional *Tetramorium* taxa reported from there that may be different from those occurring on the southern mainland and Sicily are *T. biskrense* Forel, 1904 (given as ssp. *kahenae* Menozzi, 1934 by Mei, 1995) and *T. pelagium* Poldi in Mei, 1995. However, without a revision of the North African *Tetramorium* species nothing can be said about the value of these assignments. As regards northern Italy, *T. semilaeve italicum* Menozzi, 1932 from Tuscany is probably a synonym of *T. semilaeve* or *T. caespitum*. "*T. scalenum* Le Moli & Rosi, 1991" (ascribed to Poldi in litt.) cited for the central Italian Appennines clearly is a *nomen nudum*, for no description is provided in the published account. "*T. sp. prope caespitum*" reported by Rigato & Sciaky (1989) from the Maritime Alps of Italy most probably is *T. rhenanum* Schulz, 1996 from the adjacent French Alps (Schulz, 1996), a taxon close to *T. moravicum* Kratochvil, 1941. For all we know, this is the only distinct species from the northern mainland not yet recorded from southern Italy.

The large amount of new material along with our subsequent studies revealed that southern Italy harbours four valid species of *Strongylognathus* which are *S. huberi*, *S. alpinus*, *S. destefanii* and *S. testaceus*. We attempted to work out differences between these species by showing and describing typical features rather than creating a possibly misleading key. It appears that, in *Strongylognathus*, the application of standard taxonomic measurements as employed by Baroni Urbani (1969) and Poldi (1994) suffers from the restricted number of available nest series and the large amount of intraspecific variation. We are quite convinced that worker size, scapus length and width of nodes upon which these authors based their taxonomic conclusions are not valuable characters at least regarding the material presently available. The same applies to colour of petiolar nodes, size of epinotal spines and structure and extent of propodeal rugosity used in the keys to Italian *Strongylognathus* species in the above-mentioned works. In these as well as in Poldi et al. (1995) the arrangement of species differs from our concept with respect to the taxa *emeryi* and *cecconii*, which we consider synonyms of *S. destefanii*.

Three more species of *Strongylognathus* have been cited for the Italian fauna (Poldi et al., 1995), and a further one from Malta (Fig. 27). The latter, *S. insularis* Baroni Urbani, 1968 is closely allied to *S. destefanii* and *S. afer* Emery, 1884 from North Africa, but more information is required to evaluate the status of these three taxa relative to each other. The other reported forms, *S. italicus* Finzi, 1924, *S. alboini* Finzi, 1924 and *S. pisarskii* Poldi, 1994, have primarily been compared with *S. alpinus*. Worker material of *S. italicus* from Elba (see the preceding chapter), though showing close affinities to *S. alpinus*, cannot be ascribed to any of the clearly defined species listed in the present study. Thus, *S. italicus*, described from a single female (Finzi, 1924a), is probably valid. A new mainland record of *Strongylognathus* near Florence (see preceding chapter and Fig. 27) also represents this species, which obviously differs from *S. alpinus* in its ecological preferences. The relations of the other two forms mentioned above cannot presently be determined with certainty.