

## The socially parasitic ant genus *Strongylognathus* Mayr in North Africa (Insecta: Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

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### Abstract

Morphological examination of *Strongylognathus* specimens from 14 of 15 known sites in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco revealed that only one species occurs in that part of the Palaearctic region. *S. foreli* Emery, 1922 falls into synonymy with *S. afer* Emery, 1884. Redescriptions of all morphs and allozyme data are provided. Four new records of *S. afer* are presented from Tunisia which extend the known range in this country to more southerly regions and allow some conclusions on ecological requirements. Observations of slave raids in the laboratory showed that *S. afer* is a dulotic social parasite using *Tetramorium semilaeve* André, 1883 as its host. Taxonomy, distribution and life history are discussed with respect to related species of the Mediterranean region.

**Key words:** Myrmicinae, Tetramoriini, *Strongylognathus afer*, social parasitism, ecology, distribution, allozymes

### Introduction

*Strongylognathus* Mayr, 1853 is a widespread Palaearctic ant genus, which exclusively comprises permanent social parasites dependent on *Tetramorium* Mayr, 1855 host species. Despite being well represented in Europe and Asia (e.g., Pisarski 1966, Baroni Urbani 1969, Radchenko 1991), taxonomy and distribution of most *Strongylognathus* species still remain unsatisfactorily known. Bolton (1976), when diagnosing *Strongylognathus* and the tribe Tetramoriini (Myrmicinae), has pointed out that many of the species level names in *Strongylognathus* may merely represent local populations and, with more information becoming available, the number of valid species will dwindle considerably. The compre-