southern United States (with northward extensions to about 40°N latitude on the east and west coasts) south to approximately 36°S in Chile and Argentina. A closely related Old World genus, *Tetraponera*, is distributed from Africa to southeastern Asia and Australia. Much taxonomic work remains to be done on these ants, both in terms of species diagnosis and phylogenetic evaluation. Within the genus *Pseudomyrmex* there are more than 250 available species-level names, of which about 70% are valid presently. Most of these names accumulated in a piece-meal fashion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, without the benefit of any synthetic, revisionary studies. As a first attempt to deal with the taxonomy of this genus, Kempf (1958, 1960, 1961, 1967) delineated five species groups, containing about half of the described taxa, and clarified the identities of some species within these groups. The Nearctic species of *Pseudomyrmex* were reviewed by Ward (1985), who recognized two additional species groups (*P. elongatus* group, *P. pallidus* group).

The present paper contains a reevaluation and synopsis of the major species groups, and revisions of two such groups: (i) the *P. oculatus* group, which is expanded to include the "*elongatus* group" of Ward (1985), and (ii) the *P. subtilissimus* group, here defined and diagnosed for the first time. A fourth section contains taxonomic comments about some of the remaining species of *Pseudomyrmex*. It is based on a study of type material in European and North American collections, and helps to provide a foundation for future revisionary work on the other major species groups. Such work, currently in progress, will include keys to species groups and to isolated species of uncertain placement, as well as phylogenetic assessments of the relationships among groups. A preliminary analysis of these relationships is presented in Ward (1990a). A generic revision of the subfamily Pseudomyrmecinae and a higher-level phylogenetic analysis appears in Ward (1990b).

The genus *Pseudomyrmex* is richly endowed with sympatric sibling species and taxonomically confusing "species complexes", a situation which is apparent even in the depauperate Nearctic fauna (Ward, 1985). The resolution of such taxonomic imbroglios requires careful analysis of character variation in large samples of diverse geographic origins. *Pseudomyrmex* workers do not exhibit striking interspecific variation in sculpture or spinescence; differences between closely related species often reside in subtle contrasts of size and shape. I have attempted to quantify these differences wherever practical and to avoid subjective qualitative statements. But quantitative assessments of size and shape often reveal an impressive amount of apparent intraspecific variation, making the search for diagnostic differences challenging. Needless to say, precise metric measurements are necessary for the accurate determination of many *Pseudomyrmex* species, and the taxa dealt with in this paper are no exception.