

These considerations, if valid, lead to a curious conclusion. The species *inconspicua* appears to be the most primitive Melanesian member of the *dohertyi* group, yet on purely zoogeographic evidence it appears to have achieved its present wide distribution in Melanesia only relatively recently. Judging from dispersal and speciation patterns preponderant in the better known genera of Ponerinae (Wilson, 1959, *Evolution* 13: 122-144), *inconspicua* is a "Stage-II" species that has just passed through an initial period of expansion throughout most of Melanesia (Stage I). The endemic Fijian species *sculpturata* almost certainly represents the outermost population established by this emigratory wave. Whether *inconspicua-sculpturata* entered Melanesia from southeastern Asia (Stage I, primary) or spread outward secondarily from a headquarters on New Guinea (Stage II, secondary) is uncertain, but its affinity with some of the modern Oriental species seems to indicate that it could have been a relatively recent invader into New Guinea.

In either case, the evident fact that *inconspicua-sculpturata* has only relatively recently arrived on Fiji, where its apparent descendent species exist as old endemics, is curious indeed. But the paradox might be easily removed if speciation in the *dohertyi* group is conceived as the outcome of several successive waves of *inconspicua*-like forms into New

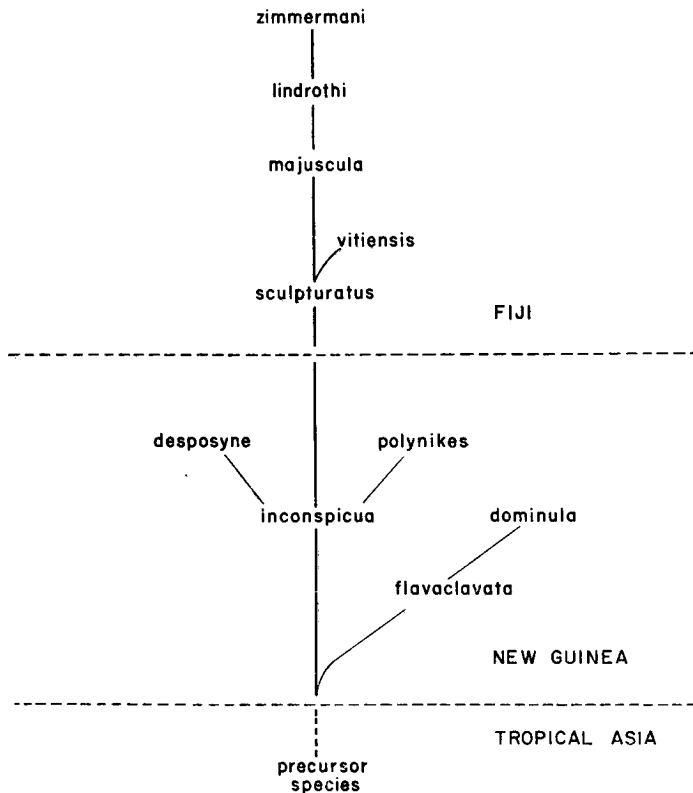


Fig. 1. Conventional phylogenetic diagram showing the hypothesized relationships of the Melanesian members of the *Cerapachys dohertyi* group.