

literature, so I urge the users of this review to forget most of the old identifications and records existing in print, especially for *O. haematodus* and its «varieties» and «subspecies». I offer here the opportunity to start afresh from a new base, which has taken into account the types and other classical material as far as possible. Practical testing of this system will of course eventually lead to its next revision.

The present consideration of the Indo-Australian *Odontomachus* fauna must of course take into account E. O. Wilson's (1959) revision of the Melanesian species. This revision was certainly a step in right direction as the first broad treatment of a large segment of the genus on a modern biological-species basis. It cleared away some taxonomic brush by synonymizing no less than 17 names — mostly of varieties and subspecies — and it established the basic taxonomy of at least one (*tyrannicus*) species-group [25]. It would have been convenient merely to base this section on Wilson's review of the fauna concerned for species-level taxonomy, with additions to include the adjacent Oriental and Australian species, but unfortunately his treatment is unsatisfactory in some ways, and basic revision is necessary. In the first place, his limitation of the review to the Melanesian area guaranteed that the taxonomy would be provisional, because in the Indo-Australian area taken as a whole, some species range outside Melanesia. But beyond this problem, which Wilson recognized, his review includes a number of errors, most of which are incorporated in his key to species.

Two names (*politus* and *retrolator*) of Melanesian forms inadvertently omitted from Wilson's review are synonymized here. In three other instances, he appears to have misjudged earlier descriptions, and in some cases he placed too much faith in the constancy of color and sculptural characters that seem to me to be variable within species. Although he appreciated the fundamental difference between the petiole shape of the *saevissimus* group and the *infandus* (*papuanus*) group (his fig. 1, here reproduced as my figs. 8 and 9), variation in this character within the groups apparently caused him to mistrust it when he made his key, and to misapply it on occasion. I have no hesitation in using this trait in an early dichotomy in my key (couplet 3), even though verbal description is elusive.

Although I believe the present treatment of the Indo-Australian *Odontomachus* fauna carries the classification closer to the real situation, a number of uncertainties remain. Most of these involve nominal species