

## EPIMACHUS MEYERI, *Finsch.*

### Meyer's Sickle-billed Bird of Paradise.

*Epimachus meyeri*, Finsch in Madarász, Zeitschr. ges. Orn. ii. p. 380 (1885).—Id. Ibis, 1886, p. 247.—D'Hamonv. Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1886, p. 509.—Meyer, J. f. O. 1889, p. 323.—Salvad. Orn. Papuasia, Agg. ii. p. 154 (1890).

*Epimachus macleayanæ*, Ramsay, Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. Wales, ii. p. 239 (1887).—Meyer, J. f. O. 1889, p. 322.—Goodwin, Ibis, 1890, p. 152.

*Epimachus macleayæ*, Meyer, J. f. O. 1889, p. 324 (*nom. emend.*).—Salvad. Orn. Papuasia, Agg. ii. p. 152 (1890).

THE British Museum possesses a pair of this interesting Bird of Paradise, procured by Mr. A. P. Goodwin during Sir William Macgregor's exploration of the Owen-Stanley Mountains in New Guinea. A female specimen was originally procured by the late Carl Hunstein on the Horseshoe Range of the Owen-Stanley Mountains, and was named by Dr. Otto Finsch in honour of Dr. A. B. Meyer, the well-known and energetic Director of the Museum at Dresden, where he has got together a series of the Paradisiidæ, which may some day rival the great collections of Leyden and London.

In 1887 Dr. E. Pierson Ramsay described the male bird as *Epimachus macleayanæ*, and named it in honour of Lady Macleay, the wife of Sir William Macleay, who has done so much to promote the study of natural science in Australia. The orthography of the specific name should have been *macleayæ*, as Dr. Meyer has already pointed out. The specimen was said by Dr. Ramsay to have been procured at the foot of the Astrolabe Mountains; and Dr. Meyer was at first inclined to believe that the birds procured by Hunstein at a height of 7000 feet would prove to be distinct, and that *E. macleayæ* and *E. meyeri* were not identical. Count Salvadori, on the other hand, has expressed his opinion that the identity of the two birds was probable, and I believe that Dr. Meyer is now also satisfied on this point. After comparing the specimens in the British Museum with Dr. Ramsay's description, I have no doubt that we have his species before us, and that there is only one form of Great Epimachus in South-eastern New Guinea. There must have been some mistake about the locality of Dr. Ramsay's specimen, as the species inhabits only very high altitudes.

Mr. Goodwin, who accompanied Sir William Macgregor's expedition to Mount Owen Stanley, has given me the following notes:—"One day, when we were on Mount Musgrave, at an altitude of 6000 feet, one of our party brought in a Long-tailed Bird of Paradise, which we recognized as the *Epimachus macleayanæ* of Ramsay. The original specimen was discovered some two years previously by Belford, one of our party, in the Maroko district. It inhabits the higher ranges at an altitude of from 6000 to 9000 feet, and is the highest ranging species of Bird of Paradise that I know, as above that limit we met with no other species of the family, though Bower-birds occurred. The call of *E. macleayanæ* is a double note, similar to the sound of striking two clappers together. I had many an unprofitable stalk before I was rewarded by a successful shot at one of these birds, and only got specimens on the last day which we spent at these heights."

Mr. Goodwin's specimens, of which the best pair have been secured by Dr. Meyer for the Dresden Museum, were all damaged by having their bills more or less broken; but Mr. Goodwin explained to me that the bird inhabits rocky ground, so that, when shot, it falls with tremendous force down the ravines, the long tail guiding it in its downward descent, and thus the slender bill invariably touches the ground first and is broken by the shock.

The adult male may be described as very similar to *E. speciosus*, but differing in the colour of the under surface, which is dark drab-brown glossed with purple, the long filamentous plumes of the flanks being mouse-brown instead of black; the axillaries are very similar in the two species, but the long plumes which clothe the flanks are differently coloured. The sickle-shaped side-plumes are arranged in four series, and are not so developed in *E. meyeri* as they are in *E. speciosus*.

The anterior (pectoral) tuft is brown, barred at the end with bronzy lilac in *E. meyeri*, and with coppery green preceded by a subterminal line of deep blue.

The median tuft in *E. meyeri* is black with a purplish metallic bar at the end, preceded by a subterminal band of metallic steel-blue.

In *E. speciosus* the colouring is the same, but the plumes are much larger.