

A critical note on the occurrence of *Leptidea* Billberg, 1820 species in North-West Africa (Lepidoptera : Pieridae)

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Abstract. Records of *Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Leptidea duponcheli* (Staudinger, 1871) from the Maghreb countries of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia are critically examined.

Samenvatting. Kritische beschouwingen over het voorkomen van soorten uit het genus *Leptidea* Billberg, 1820 in Noordwest-Afrika (Lepidoptera : Pieridae)
Literatuurgegevens over het voorkomen van *Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758) en *Leptidea duponcheli* (Staudinger, 1871) in de Maghreb-landen (Marokko, Algerije, Tunesië) worden kritisch besproken.

Résumé. Note critique concernant la présence d'espèces du genre *Leptidea* Billberg, 1820 en Afrique du Nord-Ouest (Lepidoptera : Pieridae)
Les observations de *Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758) et de *Leptidea duponcheli* (Staudinger, 1871) venant des pays du Maghreb (Maroc, Algérie et Tunisie) sont examinées de façon critique.

Key words : *Leptidea sinapis* - *Leptidea duponcheli* - Morocco - Algeria - Tunisia

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There are a number of records in the entomological literature of the occurrence in North Africa of *Leptidea sinapis* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Leptidea duponcheli* (Staudinger, 1871). The first report was in 1909 when Charles Oberthür (1909 : 158) mentioned a male specimen of *duponcheli* in the collection of Jean Boisduval. The collection was gifted to Oberthür by Boisduval (Riley 1927 : 84). The specimen was said to be labelled 'Atlas' and Oberthür went on to say 'nevertheless I never accepted [the occurrence of] this species in Algeria'. On the same page, Oberthür gave the provenance of all the *sinapis* in his collection and included 'Algérie (in coll. Boisduval); Tunisie' without giving further details.

Charles Oberthür died in 1924 and in 1926 the bulk of his Lepidoptera collection was acquired by the British Museum (Natural History) (BM(NH)) in London (Riley 1927). The collection has been examined; the male *duponcheli* mentioned by Oberthür bears three labels. The first is marked 'Ex Musaeo Dr. Boisduval', the second 'Ex Oberthür Coll. Brit. Mus. 1927-3' and the third '*Lathyri*. [an invalid homonym of *duponcheli*] Boisd. Atlas'. This last label is of thick card and much larger than the specimen beneath which it is pinned; the size and style are appropriate for a drawer label rather than a specimen data label. The provenance of the specimen is now impossible to establish; 'Atlas' almost certainly refers to the Atlas mountains of Morocco or Algeria but dates from a period when labelling of specimens generally was notoriously vague and inaccurate.

There are three specimens of *sinapis* apparently from North Africa in the Oberthür collection. One bears the 'Ex Boisduval' and 'Ex Oberthür' labels described above, with the same large, thick card label marked in this case

'*sinapis*. Linn. Algiria [sic]'. Comments regarding the *duponcheli* specimen apply equally to this *sinapis*.

There is also a pair of *sinapis*, each bearing the 'Ex Oberthür' labels described above and each with a second label marked 'Tunis[ia] (Faroult)'. Victor Faroult was a French professional collector who collected butterflies in various localities in Algeria and Tunisia over a number of years for Lord Walter Rothschild (Rothschild 1917 : 66) and others, including Oberthür. He spent much time in Tunisia in the spring and early summer of 1908 and 1909 and later (Faroult 1917), published an annotated list of his captures there, but made no mention of finding any *Leptidea* species. Rothschild had a poor opinion of Faroult's reliability and said of him (Rothschild 1917 : 69) that he had '... the bad habit ... of dragging about with him, when travelling, odd specimens of lepidoptera captured on previous expeditions ...'.

Miss L.M. Fison was an English missionary who spent many years working in the Kabylie district of Algeria from shortly after the First World War. She made lists of the butterflies she encountered and they included (Fison 1932 : 7) *duponcheli* which she noted was found in spring and summer. However, this was not her own record; she stated (Fison 1931 : 167) '... Mr Henry J. Turner ... sent me a list of the Algerian butterflies some years ago ... the localities observed by myself [are] marked by [my] initials, otherwise the localities are those given me by ... Turner'. Since her note of *duponcheli* did not bear her initials, it must have been supplied by Turner.

Henry Jerome Turner (1856-1950) was an English school teacher who was also a respected amateur entomologist. He was an 'honorary' librarian of the Royal Entomological Society of London for several years, edited the *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* for a long period and had a 'very fine library' of his own (Donisthorpe 1951 : 94-95; Riley 1951 : 76). The present author's copy of Hofmann's 1894 *Schmetterlinge Europas*, bears Turner's bookplate and there is no doubt that he had access to a comprehensive entomological library which would have included Oberthür's *Études de Lépidoptérologie comparée*. There is no record of him having visited Algeria himself and it is considered highly probable that the list he apparently supplied to Miss Fison took into account species noted by Oberthür more than 20 years earlier.

Dumont (1975 : 123-124) recorded 3 male and 2 female *sinapis* which he said had been taken at the 'Cascade des Vierges' near Ifrane in the Moroccan Middle Atlas mountains on the 19th of July 1971. The specimens were apparently taken by R. Joque and M. Nelissen flying with several *Euchloe belemia* (Esper, [1800]) and a single *Tomares ballus* (Fabricius, 1787). He stated that 1971 was a late season and illustrated this by remarking that *Coenonympha vaucheri* (Blachier, 1905) and damaged examples of the first generation of *Berberia abdelkader* (Pierret, 1837) were seen in the High Atlas mountains on the 5th of August that year. It may well have been a late season, but in fact the finding of these two species at that date is not at all unusual; *vaucheri* is routinely found in the High Atlas until well into September and the '*abdelkader*' would certainly have been the univoltine *Berberia*

lambessanus (Staudinger, 1901) which flies in the same form in the High Atlas from May to October (Tennent in press).

Finding *Euchloe belemia* and *Tomares ballus* at Ifrane in July would be highly unusual - almost as unusual as finding *sinapis*. Both are spring butterflies. The present author's experience over a number of seasons, is that *belemia* is at best uncommon at Ifrane and that *ballus* is invariably over by mid-May and sometimes earlier.

Two of the male specimens were deposited at the BM(NH) and have been examined. They are certainly *sinapis* and bear the labels 'Ifrane, Middle Atlas, 19 vii 1971, leg. H Dumont, R Joque, BM Reg No 1971-699'. Entomologically, Ifrane is probably the best known spot in the whole of the Maghreb and, whilst it is not impossible, it is highly unlikely that a *Leptidea* species would be overlooked by the numbers of European collectors who have visited it before or in the 22 years since then. The provenance of these specimens is considered to be in serious doubt.

Schuermans (1976 : 41) and Rungs (1981 : 448) mentioned the Ifrane record but the latter cast doubt on it, citing the fact that the area is well known to lepidopterists. He concluded that it was probably an 'error of labelling'.

In 1990 Devarenne (1990 : 145) recorded that *duponcheli* was taken in the Kabylie area of Algeria in 1932, presumably misunderstanding Miss Fison's notes.

Conclusion

There is no reason why either *sinapis* or *duponcheli* should not be found in the coastal regions, Rif mountains or even in the Middle Atlas mountains in Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia. The area is Mediterranean in aspect and there are many species common to both the northern and southern shores. *L. sinapis* is widespread in southern Europe and utilises a range of leguminous hostplants which are also found in North Africa. It is considered that the authenticity of all published records so far is very doubtful.

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The Cochylidae-fauna of Libya. Erratum (Lepidoptera : Tortricidae, Tortricinae)

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In *Stapfia* 16 (1988), p. 175-184, I wrote about the Cochylidae from Libya. I found it appropriate to designate neotypes of *Euxanthis mirabilana* (Turati, 1924), *Euxanthis numidana* (Turati, 1924), *Euxanthis translucidana* (Turati, 1934) and *Euxanthis cinnamomella* (Turati & Krüger, 1936). The neotypes were placed in collection K. Larsen. Meanwhile the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, Article 75(d)(6) states, that it is mandatory for a neotype to be deposited in a scientific or educational institution. According to that I have now deposited the neotypes in the collection of the Zoological Museum of Copenhagen, where most of the Lepidoptera from Libya are deposited.

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