

Short Communication

Re-discovered type material of *Pyrameis ida* Alfken, 1899 (Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae)

Nikola-Michael Prpić

Bavariastrasse 20, 80336 München, Germany

87

The Chathams red admiral *Vanessa gonerilla ida* was described as *bona* species *Pyrameis ida* by Alfken in 1899. Alfken based his description on 10 specimens captured on the Chatham Islands from which he did not select a holotype. This series of type specimens is said to be lost (Field 1971). Here I report the re-discovery of a single type specimen of *Pyrameis ida* in the Zoologische Staatssammlung München (ZSM).

Description of the material Condition

The left forewing is slightly damaged with a small part of the outer edge missing just above the anal angle. Additionally, a fingerprint of missing scales is visible on both surfaces, probably the result of somebody touching the wing after capturing or during preparation. The right forewing is undamaged. The left hindwing is lacking a small portion of the anal angle, while the right hindwing shows a deep rip at the same location. The right antenna is missing.

Diagnosis

Sex: female. Forewing length: 24.5 mm. The fringes of all wings are short and not checkered; the wing margins appear rounded compared to other *Vanessa* species. Dorsal aspect: Forewing dark brown, almost black, with a yellowish-orange ribbon running across the wing. The apex shows one larger white bar at the end of the cell and one white spot in interspace M3. The apical spots, typical for the *Vanessa* species, are very small and of a light bluish-gray colour, thus are almost invisible. The hindwing is dark brown, lighter towards the basal half. Almost all of the postdiscal region is yellowish-orange and shows 4 black spots with blue centres. Ventral aspect: The forewing is red brown with an orange area in the lower discal region and a white spot in interspace M3. In the cell a white bar and a circle of bright blue scales on black ground are visible. At the end of the cell there is a white bar, as on the upper side. The area below the costa is filled with a yellow and black tiger-striped pattern. The hindwing is of uniform, reddish brown colour,

slightly marbled with the *Vanessa*-typical web-pattern, but so blurred that even the ocular spots of the postdiscal region are hardly discernible.

Discussion

Alfken (1899) was the first to realize the distinctness of the Chatham Island's red admiral population from the one of mainland New Zealand. His work contains a detailed differential diagnosis and it applies perfectly to the present specimen. However, his assessment that the Chatham taxon constitutes a *bona* species was not followed by any other researcher at his time (e.g., Fruhstorfer 1912) and most later researchers did not know any specimens of this taxon *in natura*. The type specimens eventually were lost, thus ultimately allowing the statement by Field (1971) in his revision: "...I suspect that his name [the one given by Alfken] will probably fall as a synonym of *B. [assaris] gonerilla*."

Today the status of the Chatham population as a distinct taxon is widely acknowledged and its differences from the mainland taxon have been fully discussed in the literature (e.g., Gibbs 1980). However, these efforts lacked the taxonomic and nomenclatural foundation, since definite statements on two nominal taxa (in this case *Papilio gonerilla* Fabricius, 1775 and *Pyrameis ida* Alfken, 1899) require not only the knowledge of the biological facts, but also the comparison of the type material. This work can now be done and the matter can be solved definitely also with respect to nomenclature, but this is beyond the scope of this work and is left to a future revision.

Lectotype selection

The original description by Alfken (1899) mentions 10 specimens, from which no holotype was selected. Later, Alfken (1904) gives a more detailed description of his material: Of the 10 specimens, 8 were belonging to the "typical form" of *Pyrameis ida* and two specimens were referred to the individual form *argentata* Alfken, 1899. Of both forms one specimen is figured in colour on his plate 32. The

present specimen is most certainly not one of the figured individuals, but it corresponds quite perfectly with the “iconotype” of *Pyrameis ida* and therefore obviously is one of Alfken’s 8 typical specimens. It is here-with selected as the lectotype of *Pyrameis ida* Alfken, 1899 in order to irreversibly connect the taxon name with its corresponding type specimen and to facilitate a taxonomic revision in the future.

Type locality

The Chatham Islands (New Zealand). Reportedly the type series was captured at “auf der zu der Gruppe der Chatham Islands gehörigen Insel Warekauri an den Localitäten Te One und Maunganui” (Alfken 1899), but the present specimen’s labels state only “Chatham Islands”.

Documentation

There are three labels attached to the specimen: “Cotype von *Pyrameis ida* Alfken”, black ink on red paper; “Chatham Islands Schauinsland.”, black ink on white paper; “*Pyrameis Ida* Alfken.”, black ink on white paper. The specimen is deposited with the ZSM: Münchhausenstrasse 21, 81247 München, Germany.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Ulf Buchsbaum, Ernst-Gerhard Burmeister and Axel Hausmann for granting me free access to the valuable collections deposited with the ZSM, to John S. Dugdale and Robert J. B. Hoare for valuable comments on the manuscript and to my parents for financial support.

References

- Alfken J D. 1899.** *Pyrameis ida* nov. spec. Ein neuer Tagfalter nebst einer Varietät von den Chatham Islands. *Zoologischer Anzeiger* 22(577): 5-8.
- Alfken J D. 1904.** Beitrag zur Insectenfauna der Hawaiiischen und Neuseeländischen Inseln. *Zoologische Jahrbücher Abtheilung für Systematik, Geographie und Biologie der Thiere* 19(5): 561-628, plate 32.
- Field WD. 1971.** Butterflies of the genus *Vanessa* and of the resurrected genera *Bassaris* and *Cynthia* (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae). *Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology, Number 84*, Smithsonian Institution Press, City of Washington.
- Fruhstorfer H. 1912.** Familie Nymphalidae. In: *Die Grossschmetterlinge der Erde. Volume 9: Die Indo-Australischen Tagfalter* (ed A Seitz). Verlag Alfred Kernen, Stuttgart.
- Gibbs GW. 1980.** *New Zealand Butterflies: Identification and Natural History*. William Collins Ltd., Auckland.