

Chilades lempkei Blom, 1979, a synonym of *Chilades parrhasius* (Fabricius, 1793) (Lepidoptera, Lycaenidae)

by

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ABSTRACT. — *Chilades lempkei* Blom, 1979, is sunk in synonymy of *C. parrhasius* Fabricius, 1793, a species often, but incorrectly, placed in *Euchrysops*. It is suggested that *C. parrhasius* and the narrowly sympatric *C. galba* (Freyer) are members of a superspecies complex.

Recently in this journal a species of Lycaenidae from the Fars Province of Iran was described as *Chilades lempkei* by Blom (1979). This is a junior synonym of *Chilades parrhasius* (Fabricius, 1793), a solution which was probably overlooked by the author, because *parrhasius* (= *contracta* Butler, 1880) in Indian literature was conventionally placed in *Euchrysops*, an error which I have unfortunately been guilty of perpetuating (Larsen 1977), although for instance Howarth correctly placed it in *Chilades* (Howarth & Povolny 1976) and noted its presence in Iran. The genitalia of *Chilades* are very distinct from *Euchrysops*. The genitalia of *C. lempkei* figured by Blom match exactly specimens from Oman (Oman, Batina Coast, al Barqa, II.1979, T. B. Larsen leg., slide AQX) and from India (India, New Delhi, VII.1977, T. B. Larsen leg., slide AQY). The description is also in accordance with the normal habitus of *C. parrhasius* though it should be underlined that the species displays considerable variation, in fact so much that subspecies of *parrhasius* would be difficult to accept, although several names from the Indian subcontinent are available.

However, in researching this relatively simple problem, a more interesting problem emerged. The genitalia of *Chilades galba* (Freyer, 1855) are almost identical to those of *parrhasius* in two specimens examined (Jordan, Ghor Nimrin, IV.1977, T. B. Larsen leg., slide AQW and Afghanistan, Mazar-i-Sharif, VII.1977, T. B. Larsen leg., slide ARA). Contrary to the statement by Blom the genitalia of *Chilades eleusis* Demaison are quite distinct (Nigeria, Kano, II.1978, T. B. Larsen leg., slide AQZ), although of course the distinctive uncus of the *Chilades* group is similar.

We are thus faced with two taxa with similar genitalia of some complexity which differ as follows. *C. parrhasius* is tailed, has a clearly defined and very narrow black border on the upper side, and a lilac sheen on the blue ground colour. *C. galba* is never tailed, has a broader and vaguely defined black border, and a truer blue ground colour. The under side of both species is similar, but subject to strong parallel variation. *C. parrhasius* is found in Ceylon, India, Afghanistan, southern Iran and southern Arabia; *C. galba* is found in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, southeastern Turkey, Iraq, parts of Iran and Afghanistan. I know of two cases of exact and synchronic sympatry, namely at Herat in Afghanistan (Howarth & Povolny 1976) and in the Jabal Tuwaiq, near Riyadh in Saudi Arabia (Pittaway, personal communication), but otherwise the two taxa are allopatric.

I have not had the opportunity of studying sympatric series but I suspect that the two may be very distinct subspecies of respectively tropical and subtropical origin or possibly species in a superspecies complex. The status of *C. phiala* Grum-Grshimailo also needs to be worked out finally and I hope to settle the issue in due course.

REFERENCES

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