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ULRICH PAUKSTADT
Gerhart-Hauptmann-Str. 13
D-2940 Wilhelmshaven 6

A tropical migrant butterfly new to the eastern Mediterranean *Junonia orithya here* LANG

(Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae)

by

TORBEN B. LARSEN

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As long ago as 1973 I put on paper my prediction that one day the tropical migrant species, *Junonia orithya here* LANG would be collected in the eastern Mediterranean (LARSEN, 1974). This expectation was repeated in the recent monograph on the butterflies of East Jordan (LARSEN & NAKAMURA, 1983). The only problem was that no specimens came to light.

In conjunction with a business trip to Jordan, I was able to collect butterflies at the famous archaeological site of Pella in the northern Jordan Valley on 21 October 1983. After having looked at the splendid ruins spanning the Greek, Roman and Byzantine periods, I made my way up the narrow and very dry wadi east of the ruins. The first butterfly I saw was an unmistakable male of *Junonia orithya*. Species on *Junonia* can be almost impossible to collect, especially if you really want an individual specimen, and this was no exception. Half an hour's worth of surrealist choreography finally allowed me to net the specimen in the fourth attempt.

Although a single specimen is on hand I have no doubts in allocating it to ssp. *here* LANG from Arabia, rather than to ssp. *madagascariensis* GUENÉE from Africa. The lack of orange markings above, the size, and the lack of contrast in the markings of the hindwing underside are all characteristic. Ssp. *here* is common in most of southern and eastern Arabia, but there are no authenticated records from the Hejaz. It is a known migrant which regularly reaches the Bagdad area of

Iraq though in most years it could not survive there as a permanent resident (WILTSHIRE, 1957).

The specimen captured is thus almost certainly an immigrant from Arabia. Though most of the recorded food plants are tropical, the species might well be able to breed in Jordan since it also feeds on *Plantago* and various Scrophulariaceae. However, it could not normally survive winter, even in the hot Jordan Valley.

I am not surprised that *Junonia orithya here* finally turned up in the eastern Mediterranean. However, the probability that nearly ten years after my first prediction I should collect it myself during a one day collecting trip must surely be very low!

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TORBEN B. LARSEN
23 Jackson's Lane
London N 6

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