

A commercial interest in systematics, or a systematic interest in commerce? The Moroccan butterfly names of M. R. Tarrier

W. John TENNENT

1 Middlewood Close, Fylingthorpe, Whitby, North Yorkshire YO22 4UD,
England

Summary. Moroccan butterfly names recently raised by M. R. Tarrier (1996, 1998c) are critically appraised. Rarity status allocated to Moroccan butterflies (Tarrier, 1998a) is shown to be highly subjective and closely correlated to prices in a commercial butterfly price list (Tarrier, [1997b]). It is suggested that the basis on which names have been raised and on which calls for the protection of butterfly habitats have been made, represent a cynical attempt to promote commercial butterfly sales. It is further suggested that journal editors must bear responsibility for facilitating publication of such material. The names *amelnorum*, *antiatlasicus*, *arahoui*, *edithae*, *fairuzae* and *megalatlasica* are synonymised with existing names.

Zusammenfassung. Die von M. R. Tarrier (1996, 1998c) kürzlich aufgestellten Namen für marokkanische Tagfalter werden kritisch revidiert. Der vermeintliche "Seltenheitsstatus" marokkanischer Tagfalter im Sinne Tarriers (1998a) ist hochgradig subjektiv und korreliert eng mit den Preisen in einer kommerziellen Tagfalterliste desselben Autors (Tarrier, [1997b]). Obwohl die Benennungen auch als Argument zum Schutz der Tagfalterhabitate ins Feld geführt wurden, scheint die Grundlage für die vorgenommenen taxonomischen Änderungen ein zynischer Versuch zu sein, den kommerziellen Schmetterlingshandel mit "seltenen" oder "endemischen" Taxa zu steigern. Herausgeber wissenschaftlicher Zeitschriften müssen sich bewußt sein, daß sie mitverantwortlich sind für die Veröffentlichung derartig fragwürdiger Arbeiten. Die Namen *amelnorum*, *antiatlasicus*, *arahoui*, *edithae*, *fairuzae* und *megalatlasica* werden formell mit bereits existierenden Taxa synonymisiert.

Résumé. Des noms de papillons marocains récemment érigés par M. R. Tarrier (1996, 1998c) sont évalués de façon critique. Il est démontré que le statut de rareté attribué aux papillons marocains (Tarrier, 1998a) est hautement subjectif et en étroite corrélation avec les prix dans une liste de vente commerciale de papillons (Tarrier, [1997b]). Il est suggéré que la base sur laquelle des noms ont été érigés et des appels pour la protection d'habitats lépidoptériques ont été adressés, représente une entreprise cynique ayant pour but la vente commerciale de papillons. Il est également préconisé que les éditeurs de revues ont une large part de responsabilité en facilitant la publication d'un tel matériel. Les noms *amelnorum*, *antiatlasicus*, *arahoui*, *edithae*, *fairuzae* et *megalatlasica* sont établis comme synonymes de noms existants.

Key words: Lepidoptera, Rhopalocera, nomenclature, rarity status, commercial price, Morocco.

Introduction

In preparing a book on Maghreb butterflies (Tennent, 1996), the author became aware of several unfamiliar Moroccan butterfly names: *Euchloe falloui fairuzae*, *Plebejus allardi antiatlasicus*, *Melanargia occitanica megalatlasica*, *Melanargia ines arahoui* and *Neohipparchia hansii edithae*, and learned from a colleague that they had first appeared in a commercial butterfly catalogue produced by Michel Tarrier, Malaga, Spain. Although the names were not then published in the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature sense, the sales list was widely distributed. When Tennent (1996) went to press, the names were believed to also be in press.

Since then a series of papers on Moroccan butterflies by Tarrier have been published, including formal descriptions of the above names (Tarrier, 1996). More recently, a plea for the conservation of butterfly habitats in Morocco, said to be based on species rarity status was presented (Tarrier, 1998a) and a further new taxon, *Tomares mauretanicus amelnorum*, described (Tarrier, 1998c). In the opinion of the present author, these publications combine to add significantly to confusion surrounding Palaeartic butterfly systematics and equate, collectively, to a cynical attempt to promote commercial interest at the expense of nomenclatural stability. They also raise the serious question of how such papers find their way into print.

This paper synonymises 'new' names with previously named taxa and presents hitherto unpublished data concerning type material. It also comments on the perceived status of some Moroccan butterflies, making a comparison with prices in the latest butterfly price list available to the author (Tarrier, 1997b) and suggests a close connection between the two.

The author's acknowledgement for having rendered material assistance in research leading to these publications (Tarrier, 1996: 211; 1998a: 213) is misleading, conferring as it does an assumption of accordance with the content. Some background is appropriate and this is adequately illustrated by examining the circumstances leading to publication of the name *antiatlasicus* Tarrier, 1996. In 1993, the author provided M. Tarrier with copies of various early entomological papers on request, including Oberthür (1874), without knowledge of the line of research being pursued, or

indeed whether any line of research was being followed. Early in 1994 a colleague telephoned to enquire what the author knew of a number of unfamiliar butterfly names, including *antiatlasicus*, seen in a recent sales list (TARRIER, [1994]) and the author subsequently obtained from TARRIER a copy of the draft of a manuscript, a substantially revised version of which was later published in the journal *Alexanor* (TARRIER, 1996). This draft introduced the name *antiatlasicus* but did not, for example, include in the references a paper by De Prins *et al.* (1992), which provides critical information for anyone carrying out research into North African *Plebejus*.

The author learned that justification for raising the name *antiatlasicus* was based on perceived phenotypic differences between the *allardi* population reported from the Anti-Atlas mountains of Morocco by Bozano & Giacomazo (1988), and the original brief description of *allardi* provided by Oberthür (1874). M. TARRIER was unaware of the paper by De Prins *et al.* (1992) or that *allardi* was locally common in Tunisia and had not seen any material from those countries.

It was also learned that the manuscript had apparently, in 1993 or early in 1994, been rejected by the editor of a European journal. It is probable that by this time, advertisement and subsequent sale of specimens of 'new' races of butterflies made retraction of names virtually impossible. A revised version of the manuscript, which did refer to De Prins *et al.* (1992) and to other publications overlooked in the original draft, was published in *Alexanor* several years later (TARRIER, 1996).

Prior knowledge of the intended publication of five of the six new names synonymised in this paper, provided the opportunity of examining type material which the early draft indicated had been deposited in the collections of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, and the Département de Zoologie et d'Ecologie Animale, Institut Scientifique, Université Mohammed V, Rabat, Morocco. Relevant details appear below. Published data relating to type material included a specific date of capture, although it will be seen that the actual dates which accompany type specimens are general and cover a two week period. The whereabouts of paratypes said to be deposited in 'coll. TARRIER' is not known and they are considered likely to have been sold.

New synonymy

Euchloe falloui Allard, 1867

Euchloe falloui fairuzae Tarrier, 1996, **syn. n.** — *Alexanor* 19(4): 195.

Type data published. Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Tiniffitt, Maroc, djebel Sarrho, Anti-Atlas oriental, 1600 m, 5.iv.1993, M. Tarrier leg. (Rabat); 'numerous' male and female paratypes, same locality, 1500–1800 m, 5 and 6.iv.1993 (Paris, Rabat, Tarrier).

Type material examined (8 ♂, 2 ♀). Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Tiniffitt, 1–15.iv.1993; M. Tarrier leg.; 3 ♂, ♀ paratypes, same data (Rabat); 4 ♂, ♀ paratypes, same data (Paris).

Comment. Said to be smaller than typical *falloui* and with a more pointed forewing apex. Like *Melanargia ines* Hoffmann-segg, 1804 (see below), it is not unusual to find individuals or populations of butterflies in arid regions that are generally smaller than the same species in cooler or in more northern habitats (cf. figs. 21, 22, 28 on pl. 5 of Tennent, [1996]). The name *fairuzae* is a junior subjective synonym of *falloui*.

Tomares mauretanicus Lucas, 1849

Tomares mauretanicus amelni Tarrier, [1997b] — Lepidopteron [sic, recte Lepidopterorum] Catalogus, butterflies of Morocco, general pricelist 1997: 3 (unpublished manuscript name).

Tomares mauretanicus amelnorum Tarrier, 1998, **syn. n.** — *Alexanor* 20(2): 120.

Type material not examined. *Tomares mauretanicus* is an immensely variable species, with some characters subject to considerable local and individual variation and others clinal (Tennent, 1996: 28). The name *amelnorum* is a junior subjective synonym of *mauretanicus*.

Plebejus allardi Oberthür, 1874

Plebejus allardii antiatlasicus Tarrier, 1996, **syn. n.** — *Alexanor* 19(4): 198.

Type data published (21 ♂, 7 ♀). Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Tarakatine, Maroc, Anti-Atlas sud-occidental, 1600 m, 10.iv.1993, M. Tarrier leg. (Rabat); 18 ♂, 4 ♀ paratypes with same data, but 8 and

10.iv.1993; 2 ♂, 3 ♀, Aït Abdallah, Maroc, Anti-Atlas occidental, 1500 m, 9.iv.1993, M. Tarrier leg. (Paris, Rabat, Tarrier).

Type material examined (8 ♂, 5 ♀). Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Tarakatine, 1–15.iv.1993, M. Tarrier leg.; 3 ♂, 4 ♀ paratypes, same data (Rabat); 4 ♂, ♀ paratypes, same data (Paris).

Comment. Upperside blue suffusion of female '*antiatlasicus*' was said to be very extensive, especially on the hindwings ('weak' blue suffusion in nominotypical *allardi*). Orange submarginal lunules were said to be usually present on the upperside forewing of the female, whilst those on the hindwing were said to be large or very large (in nominotypical *allardi* absent on forewings, large on hindwings). Comparison with the four female uppersides of *allardi* illustrated by Tennent (1996: pl. 12, figs. 33–36) shows that this is not so. All diagnostic features provided for *antiatlasicus* fall within the range of typical *allardi* which is a variable butterfly, particularly in the female sex. The name *antiatlasicus* is a junior subjective synonym of *allardi*.

Melanargia ines ines Hoffmansegg, 1804

Melanargia ines arahoui Tarrier, 1996, **syn. n.** — *Alexanor* 19(4): 206.

Type data published. Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Taghatine, Maroc, djebel Siroua, Anti-Atlas oriental, 1800 m, 7.vi.1993, M. Tarrier leg. (Rabat); 'numerous' males and females, same data (Paris, Rabat, Tarrier).

Type material examined (10 ♂, 4 ♀). Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Taghatine, 1–15.iv.1993, M. Tarrier leg.; 6 ♂, 2 ♀ paratypes, same data (Rabat); 3 ♂, 2 ♀ paratypes, same data (Paris).

Comment. Said to be small and dark with extensive dark markings. Individuals with extensive black markings are not uncommon (f. *jahandiezi* Oberthür, 1922). In arid places, including the Moroccan Anti-Atlas and southern regions of Algeria and Tunisia, small specimens are not unusual (Tennent, 1996: 72). The name *arahoui* is a junior subjective synonym of *ines*.

Melanargia occitanica pelagia Oberthür, 1911

Melanargia occitanica megalatlasica Tarrier, 1996, **syn. n.** — *Alexanor* 19(4): 204.

Type data published. Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Talhremt, Maroc, Haut Atlas septentrional, 1900 m, 28.v.1993, M. Tarrier leg. (Rabat); 'numerous' males and females, same locality, v.–vi.1992 and 1993 (Paris, Rabat, Tarrier).

Type material examined (10 ♂, 4 ♀). Holotype male, Tizi-n-Talhremt, 1–15.vi.1993; M. Tarrier leg.; 5 ♂, 4 ♀ paratypes, same data; ♂, same locality, 16–31.v.1993 (Rabat); 3 ♂ paratypes, same data (Paris).

Comment. Features said to separate *megalatlasica* (black markings 'thinner' on both surfaces, ocelli smaller) from Moroccan populations of *occitanica* fall within the range of *occitanica pelagia* Oberthür, 1911 and the name *megalatlasica* is a junior subjective synonym of *pelagia*. A female specimen illustrated by Tennent (1996: pl. 20, fig. 17) is wrongly identified (Tennent, 1996: 160) as *M. ines ines*; this should read *M. occitanica pelagia*.

Neohipparchia hansii Austaut, 1879

Hipparchia hansii tansleyi Tarrier, 1995 — *Linn.belg.* 15(1): 42, 40 (figs. 7 [9, 10], 8 [7, 8], 9 [8]).

Hipparchia hansii edithae Tarrier, 1995 — *Linn.belg.* 15(1): 40 (figs. 7 [7], 8 [5], 9 [6]) nom. nud.

Hipparchia hansii edithae Tarrier, 1996, syn. n. — *Alexanor* 19(4): 208.

Type data published. Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Talhremt, Maroc, Haut Atlas septentrional, 1900–2200 m, 28.viii.1993, M. Tarrier leg. (Rabat); 'numerous' male and female paratypes, same locality, 10 and 12.ix.1992; 17, 19, 21, 22 and 28.viii.1993 (Paris, Rabat, Tarrier).

Type material examined (15 ♂, 1 ♀). Holotype ♂, Tizi-n-Talhremt, 16–31.viii.1993, M. Tarrier leg.; 11 ♂, no ♀ paratypes, same data (Rabat); 4 ♂, ♀ paratypes, same data (Paris).

Comment. Individual variation in *Neohipparchia hansii* is great and it is difficult to find two specimens alike. A seasoned 'splitter' would no doubt be able to support separation of almost every *hansii* population into subspecies, and variation is probably best viewed as being ecologically based (Tennent, 1996: 75). The name *edithae* is synonymous with *hansii*. It is noted that in the catalogues examined, female butterflies command double the price of males and that although the type series was said (Tarrier, 1996) to include 'numerous' specimens of both sexes, type material

available for examination consisted of 15 males and only one female.

The author did not know of the existence of the name *tansleyi* until publication and type material has not been examined. The name *tansleyi* is a junior subjective synonym of *hansii* (Tennent, 1996: 75).

Habitat protection

There is no doubt that natural habitats throughout the world require protection, nor is it in doubt that butterflies are useful indicators of biodiversity, since they are generally well known, moderately easy to identify and are sensitive to environmental pressures and conditions. Assessing the status of key species and offering advice on long-term habitat protection is a sensitive issue and one that carries with it a high degree of responsibility if advice is ever to be taken seriously. The list of butterfly habitats prepared by Tarrier (1998a), and accompanying allocation of I.U.C.N. status indicators, bears a positive correlation to prices in Tarrier's latest butterfly sales list (Tarrier, [1997b]) and is subjective to the point of irresponsibility.

Status allocated to Moroccan butterflies (Tarrier, 1998a) falls into four categories, from 'Critically Endangered' (CR) through 'Endangered' (EN) and 'Vulnerable' (VN) to 'Lower Risk' (LR). Almost all the taxa so categorised are also offered for sale (Tarrier, [1997b]). It is apparent that there is confusion between 'Critically Endangered' and 'Locally Common' as well as strong positive correlation between 'Critically Endangered' and 'expensive' (table 1).

Table 1. Moroccan butterflies: comparison of rarity status with average price

Declared status (Tarrier, 1998a)	Price per pair, DM (Tarrier, [1997b])
CR (Critically Endangered)	192.00
EN (Endangered)	93.00
VU (Vulnerable)	52.50
LR (Lower Risk)	17.00

It is not intended to enter into detailed reasons as to why much, if not most of the data in Tarrier (1998a) is inaccurate,

although it would certainly be possible to do so. Some specific examples will serve to illustrate the point.

In Morocco, five taxa of the genus *Pieris* Schrank, 1801 occur. Of these, *P. rapae mauretanicus* Verity, 1908 is a crop pest, described as LR (TARRIER, 1998a: 200) and offered for sale (TARRIER, [1997b]: 2) at DM 6.00 per pair. *P. brassicae* Linnaeus, 1758, also LR, is offered for sale at DM 12.00 per pair and *P. napi segonzaci* Le Cerf, 1923, described as VU, is for sale at DM 30.00 per pair. This last butterfly was considered for many years to be confined to Djebel Toubkal in the Moroccan High Atlas and is common in the Toubkal National Park (TENNENT, 1997). In recent years it has been found to be much more widespread than previously realised and probably flies throughout the High Atlas mountains (TENNENT, 1996: 10). Although moderately local in distribution, it cannot by any presently acceptable criterion be considered Vulnerable.

The remaining two *Pieris* taxa, *P. napi atlantis* Oberthür, 1925 and *P. mannii haroldi* Wyatt, 1952 are two of the most local and scarce butterflies in Morocco. On the very edge of their species range, they may even warrant 'CR' listing but it is surely hypocritical in the extreme to claim that they are in critical danger of extinction (TARRIER, 1998a: 200) whilst also offering wild caught specimens for sale at DM 300.00 per pair (TARRIER, [1997b]: 2).

Likewise, *Maurus vogelii vogelii* Oberthür, 1920 and *M. vogelii insperatus* Tennent, 1996 are allocated CR status and offered for sale at DM 120.00 and DM 150.00 per pair respectively, despite the fact that, although *vogelii* was only known from one locality in the Moroccan Middle Atlas mountains for 74 years after its discovery (TENNENT, 1996: 39), it is now known from a number of localities in the Middle and High Atlas mountains. Ironically, recent knowledge on the distribution of *vogelii vogelii* in the Middle Atlas is due largely to the efforts of TARRIER (1998b). The very local distribution of both races barely merits Vulnerable status and neither can be said to be Critically Endangered.

The nomenclature of western Palaearctic butterflies is in a sorry state and that used by TARRIER (1998a etc.) adds significantly to the confusion. For example, in the opinion of the author, the Satyrine butterflies *Melanargia ines*, *Neohipparchia hansii*, *Pseudotergumia fidia* Linnaeus, 1767 and *Pseudochazara atlantis*

Austaut, 1905 each fly in Morocco in a single race (Tennent, 1996), whereas TARRIER ([1997b], 1998a) listed 13 names for these four species. The very nature of systematics provides scope for a disparity of views and, whilst it would be naive to hope that the nomenclature of Tennent (1996) was universally acceptable, it did represent an attempt to bring some stability to North African butterfly nomenclature. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that, for a commercial butterfly dealer, a profusion of names, regardless of their validity, roughly equals a profusion of Deutsche Marks.

The activities of amateur workers, of which the author is one, and professional alike, are constantly under scrutiny by misguided and ill-informed individuals who seek to stop collection of insects and other animals for any purpose. Manipulation of systematics for commercial gain by an irresponsible minority does considerable harm to those carrying out responsible field work and is to be deplored.

Häuser & Nekrutenko (1998) strongly urged journal editors to use restraint in accepting papers for publication and it is clear that journal editors must accept a major part of the responsibility for aiding and abetting publication of irresponsible material.

Acknowledgements

Mohammed Arahou, Département de Zoologie et d'Ecologie Animale, Institut Scientifique, Université Mohammed V, Rabat, Morocco, kindly allowed access to the University collections; Georges Bernardi, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, kindly provided relevant data from the Museum collection. A number of anonymous colleagues assisted with some translation, provided the author with copies of commercial lists and commented on a draft of this paper.

References

- BOZANO, G. C. & GIACOMAZO, E., 1988. The Moroccan Anti-Atlas: a four day survey of the Rhopalocera in April 1987 (Lepidoptera). — *Nota lepid.* 11(1): 83–84.
- DE PRINS, W. O., VAN DER POORTEN, D. & BÁLINT, Zs., 1992. Taxonomic revision of the North African species of the genus *Plebejus* Kluk, 1802 (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae). — *Phegea* 20(1): 11–34.

- HÄUSER, C. L., & NEKRUTENKO, Y. P., 1998. Comments on "Nomina Lepidopterorum nova" by S. K. Korb (Papilionidae, Nymphalidae). — *Nota lepid.* 21(1): 74–84.
- OBERTHÜR, C., 1874. Lépidoptères nouveaux d'Algérie. — *Petites Nouv.Ent.* 1(103): 412–413.
- TARRIER, M. [E. Z. BRANES FLORES], [1991]. Butterflies of Morocco [pricelist] 1991. — 2 p.
- TARRIER, M. [E. Z. BRANES FLORES], [1992]. Butterflies of Morocco [pricelist] 1992. — 2 p.
- TARRIER, M. [E. Z. BRANES FLORES], [1993a]. Lepidopteron [sic, recte Lepidopterorum] Catalogus, butterflies of Morocco, pricelist 1993. — 4 p.
- TARRIER, M. [E. Z. BRANES FLORES], [1993b]. Lepidopteron [sic, recte Lepidopterorum] Catalogus, Palaearctic butterflies (general stock) [pricelist], December 1993 + January–February 1994. — 4 p.
- TARRIER, M. [E. Z. BRANES FLORES], [1994]. Butterflies of Morocco, pricelist 1994. — 4 p.
- TARRIER, M., 1995. *Hipparchia hansii* (Austaut, 1879) au Maroc: (Première note). Éléments éco-éthologiques, ébauche biogéographique et aspects raciaux (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae, Satyrinae). — *Linn.belg.* 15(1): 33–44.
- TARRIER, M., 1996. Nouveaux taxa des Atlas marocains (Lepidoptera Rhopalocera). — *Alexanor* 19(4): 195–213.
- TARRIER, M., [1997a]. Lepidopteron [sic, recte Lepidopterorum] Catalogus, various Palaearctic Rhopalocera [pricelist], dated October 1996. — 5 p.
- TARRIER, M., [1997b]. Lepidopteron [sic, recte Lepidopterorum] Catalogus, butterflies of Morocco, general pricelist 1997. — 8 p.
- TARRIER, M., 1998a. Protection d'habitats lépidoptériques au Maroc. Seconde partie: nouvelles considérations et inventaire final. — *Linn.belg.* 16(5): 197–215.
- TARRIER, M., 1998b. Note phénologique en apport à la connaissance de *Plebejus (Maurus) vogelii* (Oberthür, 1920) (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae). — *Linn.belg.* 16(5): 216–218.
- TARRIER, M., 1998c. Trois cents nouveaux jours de lépidoptérologie au Maroc. — *Alexanor* 20(2): 81–127.
- TENNENT, W. J., 1996. The butterflies of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. — Gem, Wallingford. xxxvi + 217 p., 32 pls.
- TENNENT, W. J., 1997. Butterflies of the Toubkal National Park and its environs, Morocco (Lepidoptera: Rhopalocera). — *Br.J.Ent.nat.Hist.* 10: 25–29.

ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Nota lepidopterologica](#)

Jahr/Year: 1999

Band/Volume: [22](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Tennent John W.

Artikel/Article: [A commercial interest in systematics, or a systematic interest in commerce? The Moroccan butterfly names of M. R. Tarrier 48-57](#)