

## VERIFICATION OF THE PRESENCE OF *DANAUS CHRYSIPPUS* F. *ALCIPPUS* (LINNAEUS, 1758) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE, DANAINAE) IN GREECE

Antonia Aga<sup>1</sup> & Fotis Samaritakis<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E-mail: agaantonia@yahoo.gr

<sup>2</sup> E-mail: samimpros@yahoo.gr

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*Danaus chrysippus* is reported in Greece mainly from coastal areas of the west mainland as well as islands of the E and S Aegean region (Pamperis 2009). The phenotype with extensive white hindwings is named forma "*alcippus*". So far only one "*alcippus*" individual has been recorded from Greece, in an autumn migration by John Coutsis (in John & Vane-Wright 2019).

On the 12 October 2019 Krystallenia Pougadaki and the first author organized a research trip to Messologhi-Aitoliko Lagoon National Park, Prefecture of Aitoloacarnania. On a warm windy day many individuals of *Danaus chrysippus* were flying near the salt fields. The host plant *Cynanchum acutum* occurred in large numbers near the coast and on the sides along a dirt road. Several eggs were observed on the leaves, creamy (fresh ones) and silver coloured (old ones, almost ready for hatching). Several mating events were observed also, as well as two females ovipositing on and under the leaves of *Cynanchum acutum*. Among the nominotypical individuals, with orange/brown hindwings, the first author noticed one male (Fig.1A,1B) with an extensive white patch on the hindwing, the white covering more than 50% of the discal cell, typical for form "*alcippus*". The butterfly flew in large circles of 150-200 m<sup>2</sup> with other males, nectaring on *Limonium* plants.

A non-typical *Danaus chrysippus* was observed by the second author on the morning of the 2nd of October 2016 on the island of Crete, at the village of Tavronitis, about 22km west of Chania (Fig.1C). The hindwings had a white patch, not as extensive as to cover the discal cell, which was 100% orange/brown, thus it did not belong to f. "*alcippus*". It could be related to a form called f. "*alcippoides*", but individuals assigned to this form and collected at Cyprus (John & Vane-Wright 2019) or at Malta (Agius 2014) show significant pattern differences to our individual from Crete. In this case also, other butterflies belonging to the nominate form were present. The habitat was an open field c. 100m away from the sea, dominated by *Cynanchum acutum*, *Dittrichia viscosa*, *Rubus sanctus*, *Symphotrichum squamatum* and *Arundo donax* plants.

In both cases no specimens were collected, the butterflies were observed and photographed.

## *Danaus chrysippus* forma "*alcippus*" in Greece



**Fig.1.** *Danaus chrysippus*, non typical forms. **A, B.** forma "*alcippus*", Messologhi, Aitoloacarnania, photo by A.A. **C.** Tavronitis, Crete, photo by F.S.

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### Literature

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