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ON THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME PAINTED LADY FOR *VANESSA CARDUI* (LINNAEUS, 1758) (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE)

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The Painted Lady is among the most widely distributed butterflies known, being found on every continent except Antarctica (Shields, 1992). The butterfly is common in Europe and was among those named by the creator of the binomial system of classification, Carolus Linnaeus in 1758. The English name for the butterfly, Painted Lady is believed by some to be a euphemism for a lady of easy virtue, referring to the fact that the butterfly is found almost all over the world, as are ladies who practice the oldest profession.

The name Painted Lady was believed to have been coined by James Petiver (1665-1718), an apothecary who coined English names for several butterflies, including Admirals, Tortoiseshells and Brimstone. However, Salmon *et al.* (2001) state that although Petiver published this name, it was an already current folk name for the butterfly.

Since the global distribution of butterflies was unknown in 1699, when the name was published in Petiver's *Musei Petiverani Centuria Prima Rariora Naturae Continens* series, it is unlikely that the

worldwide ubiquity of the Painted Lady has anything to do with the pre-existing folk name. An alternate hypothesis is that some Painted Lady butterflies have, on the underside of the hindwing, markings that bear a remarkable resemblance to a seated lady, in a bonnet and a flowing skirt such as were generally worn in the 17th century and earlier. It is likely that this caught someone's eye and the name was coined. Since it was appropriate, it stuck.

There is considerable variation in the hindwing pattern of *Vanessa cardui*. A female figure does not appear on a large percentage of Painted Ladies. Where a female figure does seem to appear, it doesn't always look like an artist's model. Still, under the circumstances, who is to say that the name didn't originate with a specimen that showed a seated female figure that resembles an artist's model? There is certainly no other plausible alternative explanation for the common name.



Fig: Hindwing of *Vanessa cardui* showing the painted lady.

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REVIEW AND STATUS OF *YPHIMA NEWARA* MOORE (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

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