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OBSERVED MATING BETWEEN *PIERIS RAPAE* AND *PIERIS PROTODICE*
(PIERIDAE)

Late in the afternoon of 5 July 1971, I explored a weed-infested lemon and avocado orchard in Goleta Valley (Santa Barbara County, California), looking for *Nathalis iole* (Boisduval). *N. iole* had once been locally common in lemon groves in rural areas around Santa Barbara, but apparently had not colonized this orchard. The only butterflies sighted that afternoon were *Danaus plexippus* (Linnaeus), *Vanessa carye* (Hubner), *Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus) and *Pieris protodice* (Boisduval & LeConte). The latter two species were flying around the wild mustard in great abundance, fluttering close to the ground, and often landing—obviously getting ready to settle down for the night.

At approximately 1700 I noticed a copulating pair of *Pieris* land a few feet in front of me. Upon closer observation, I noticed that they were two different species, a male *P. rapae* and a female *P. protodice*. The female *protodice* was the flying partner. They were netted, pinched and carefully placed in an envelope. Still in copulation, I later mounted them on a piece of cardboard and placed them in my collection.

When two close species are found together in abundance, such interspecific matings are possibly not as rare as one might suspect. I have previously observed mating between these two species in the Santa Barbara area. About a decade ago, in a field across from Arroyo Burro Beach State Park, I noted a pair in copulation. Considering that these species are very common throughout the United States, and are usually ignored by local lepidopterists, many such matings could go unnoticed.

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