Case 2403

Valanginites Sayn in Kilian, 1910 (Cephalopoda, Ammonoidea): confirmation of the author of the genus, and of Ammonites nucleus Roemer, 1841 as its type species

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to confirm Sayn in Kilian, 1910 as the author of the Cretaceous ammonite genus Valanginites, and current usage of Ammonites nucleus Roemer, 1841 as its type species, although the specific name was first introduced by Phillips in 1829.

1. Valanginites is a widely distributed early Cretaceous ammonite genus which has been discussed extensively (see Kemper, Rawson & Thieuloy, 1981, p. 274). The name was attributed to Sayn by Spath (1930, p. 149) and to Sayn in Kilian by Roman (1938, p. 386) and Khimshiashvili et al. (in Luppov & Druschits, 1958, p. 95) but is usually assigned, erroneously, to Kilian. The type species is generally quoted as Ammonites nucleus Roemer, but Roemer was not the author of the name; it is desirable in the interests of stability that identity of the type species should be placed beyond doubt.

2. Kilian (1910, p. 193) first mentioned Valanginites as ‘H. [Holcostephanus] (Valanginites) Rebouli Sayn (in litt.).’ The specific name rebouli is a nomen nudum, but on page 194 he listed ‘H. (Valanginites) perinflatus Math. sp., H. (Valanginites) Bachelardi Sayn sp., and H. (Valanginites) simplus D’Orb. sp.’ It is thus clear that authorship of Valanginites was attributed to Sayn and the genus should be cited as Valanginites Sayn in Kilian, 1910 (Recommendation 51B of the Code).

3. On page 196 Kilian referred to ‘der Gruppe des Hole, nucleus Roem. sp. (=Valanginites Sayn)’ and in footnote 3 on page 196 he stated ‘G. Sayn hat in dem verkiesten Holcostephaniden-Material der mittleren und oberen Valendis-Stufe Südost-Frankreichs folgende Beobachtungen gemacht, deren Veröffentlichungen in nächster Zeit geschehen wird. (Mündliche Mitteilung von G. Sayn.)—S. G. Valanginites G. Sayn: V. Rebouli G. Sayn, V. Bachelardi G. Sayn sp., V. simplus D’Orb. (Gruppe des Holc. nucleus Roem.—s.g. Valanginites G. Sayn.—v. Koenen rechnete diese Formen zu Polypychites); V.(?) perinflatus Math. sp.’ It is thus clear that authorship of Valanginites was attributed to Sayn and the genus should be cited as Valanginites Sayn in Kilian, 1910 (Recommendation 51B of the Code).

4. In 1930, Spath (p. 149, footnote) designated perinflatus Matheron, 1878, as the type species of the genus, although in 1939 (p. 11, footnote 2) he stated that ‘since on p. 196, Kilian definitely identified the sub-genus Valanginites with Ammonites nucleus Roemer, and questioned the generic position of V. (?) perinflatus, my selection is
invalid; and \( V. \) nucleus (Roemer) must be taken as genotype of \( Valanginites \). In the meantime, Roman (1938, p. 386) had already designated \( A. \) nucleus Roemer, 1841 as the type. Subsequent authors have generally accepted nucleus Roemer as the type species of \( Valanginites \), e.g. Wright (in Moore, 1957, p. L348); Khimshiashvili et al. (in Luppov & Drushchits, 1958, p. 95); Riccardi & Westermann (1970, p. 889); Kemper, Rawson & Thieuloy (1981, p. 274); Company (1987, p. 173).

5. However, as Kemper, Rawson & Thieuloy pointed out, \( Ammonites \) nucleus was named and figured, without description, by Phillips in 1829 (p. 174, pl. 2, fig. 43). The holotype is in the Yorkshire Museum, York (numbered YM 415), contrary to the statement by Howarth (1962, p. 133). It is a smooth ammonite nucleus from the Speeton Clay of Speeton, England, less than 5 mm in diameter. It is probably the nucleus of a \( Simbirskites \) or \( Polyptychites \) but it is too small to be determined. The species name has not been attributed to Phillips for over 50 years and even in 1889 the species was described as ‘obscure’ (Lamplugh, p. 614).

6. Roemer (1841, p. 87, pl. 13, fig. 2) described and figured a much larger ammonite (about 45 mm in diameter) from Bredenbeck, north Germany, as ‘\( Ammonites \) nucleus Phillips (?)’, but stressed that because Phillips’ specimen was so small the specific assignation of the German specimen was uncertain. Subsequent authors, e.g. Khimshiashvili et al. (in Luppov & Drushchits, 1958, p. 95), Struckmann (1892, p. 73) and Thieuloy (1977, p. 426) interpreted the species from Roemer and attributed the name to him. Roemer’s specimen is lost but a cast in the Geologisches-Paläontologisches Institut, Göttingen, was figured by Kemper, Rawson & Thieuloy (1981, pl. 38, figs 1 and 2).

7. To remove uncertainty about authorship of the genus, and to stabilise existing usage of the type species, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to:

(a) suppress the specific name nucleus Phillips, 1829, as published in the binomen \( Ammonites \) nucleus, and all other uses of that name prior to \( Ammonites \) nucleus Roemer, 1841, for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;

(b) set aside all designations of type species for \( Valanginites \) Sayn in Kilian, 1910 prior to that of \( V. \) nucleus Roemer, 1841 by Roman (1938);

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name \( Valanginites \) Sayn in Kilian, 1910 (gender: masculine), type species \( Ammonites \) nucleus Roemer, 1841 by the ruling in (1) (b) above;

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name nucleus Roemer, 1841, as published in the binomen \( Ammonites \) nucleus (specific name of the type species of \( Valanginites \), Sayn in Kilian, 1910 by virtue of the proposal in (1) (b) above);

(4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name nucleus Phillips, 1829, as published in the binomen \( Ammonites \) nucleus, and as suppressed in (1) (a) above.

References


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