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GENUS *DELPHINITES* (AMMONOIDEA) IN THE VALANGINIAN OF RUSSIA

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On Russian platform ammonites of the genus *Delphinites* Sayn, 1901 (subfam. Platylenticeratinae, incertae familiae) are characteristic of Undulatoplicatilis Zone of the Lower Valanginian. Formerly these ammonites were assigned to the genera *Pseudogarnieria* and *Proleopoldia,* the type species of which are described from the Volga River Basin. The authors have studied a new material from the type locality (River Menya, Chuvashia, the middle reaches of the Volga River) and also the collections of W. Stchirowsky, A. Pavlow, I. Sasonova. Up to now all doubtless Central Russian *Delphinites* originate from this locality and were described as 7 species: *Oxynoticeras tuberculiferum* Stchirowsky, 1893; *O. undulatoplicatile* Stchirowsky, 1893; *Hoplites menensis* Stchirowsky, 1893; *H. kurmyschensis* Stchirowsky, 1893; *Platylenticeras (Pseudogarnieria) alatyrense* Kemper, 1961; *Pseudogarnieria securis* Sasonova, 1971, *Proleopoldia stchirowskyi* Sasonova, 1971. The ammonites occur in a thin (up to 0.8 m) sandstone bed overflown by bivalves and ammonites (*Buchia*, *Surites*, *Menjaites*, etc.) and having obvious signs of condensation.

Representatives of *Delphinites* from this section may be arranged in a single morphoseries. This series begins from oxycone shells with the ventral side very narrow and only weak rugae and striate ornamentation on lateral sides (*D. undulatoplicatilis*). Several following morphs developed the primary ribs raised in umbilical part (*D. tuberculiferus*, *D. securis*, *D. alatyrense*). In the next morph curved primary ribs well developed on the juvenile whorls are modified with the shell growth into umbilical tubercles, short ribs ("denticles") near ventrolateral shoulder are observed, and the venter remains very narrow (Fig. 1). This still undescribed morph represents a transition from "*Pseudogarnieria*" to "*Proleopoldia*". These latter have trapezoid section of whorls with flattened venter; the primary ribs raised in umbilical part, and more or less expressed tubercles on ventrolateral shoulder (*D. kurmyschensis, D. menensis, D. stchirowskyi*). This series is culminated with one more still undescribed form showing sharp tubercles on the midflanks, disappearing as the shell grows (Fig. 2). This form closely resembles *Delphinites (Pseudogarnieria) donovani* described from Greenland (Alsen & Rawson, 2005).

In our opinion, in the Undulatoplicatilis Zone in the type locality the ammonites from 3–4 faunal horizons are condensed, each of them being characterized by only one species of *Delphinites*. The species of Kemper (1961) and Sasonova (1971) are subjective synonyms of species described by Stchirowsky (1893).

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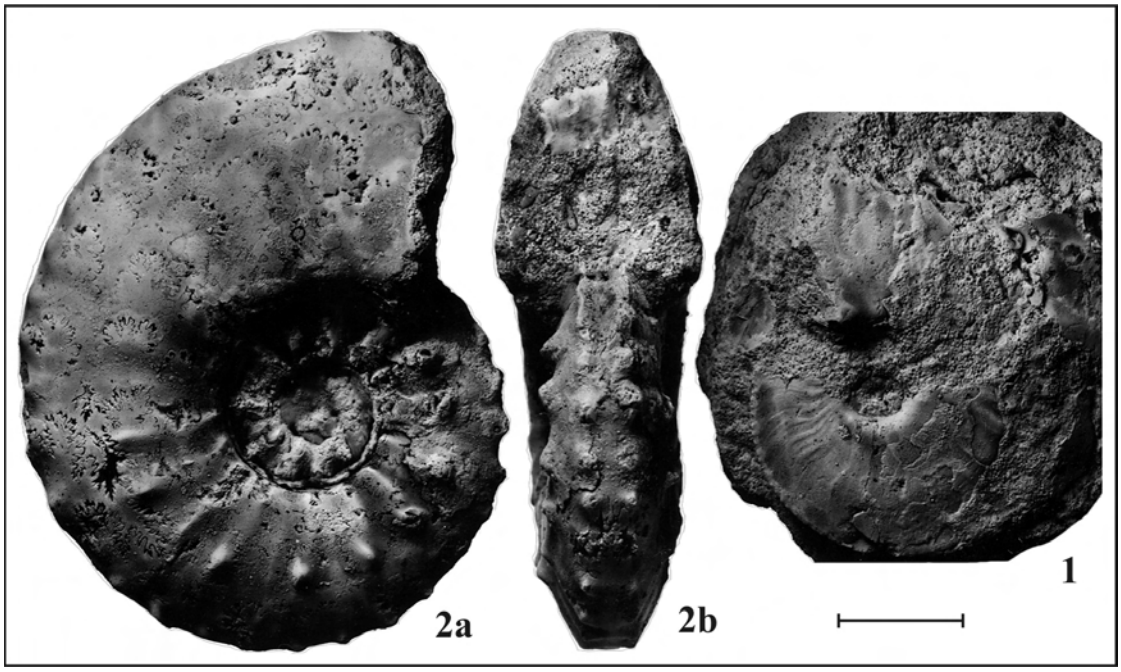

Explanations of figures:
1. *Delphinites* sp., transition from "*Pseudogarnieria*" to "*Proleopoldia*", Vernadsky State Geol. Museum N II-108/402, Moscow, lateral view.
2. *Delphinites* sp. (sp. nov.?), Vernadsky State Geol. Museum N II-117/788, Moscow, a – lateral view, b – apertural view. Scale bar 15 mm.

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