

THE EARLY APTIAN AMMONITE BIOZONATION IN MEDITERRANEAN PROVINCE

Seyed Naser **RAISOSSADAT**, Hugh G. **OWEN**, Joaquin **GARCÍA-MONDÉJAR**, Peter F. **RAWSON**

The Lower Cretaceous biozonation of the Tethys has been discussed during recent years. A biozonation has been introduced based on Deshayesitidae for the Upper Barremian-Lower Aptian (e.g. Bogdanova & Tovbina, 1994); a scheme accepted by the Lower Cretaceous Cephalopod Team as a standard for the Mediterranean area (Hoedemaeker *et al.*, 1993). Genera of the family are recorded throughout the Tethyan Realm and extend into the Boreal Realm. Three genera of the family, *Turkmeniceras*, *Deshayesites* and *Dufrenoyia*, are well distributed in the Mediterranean region of Tethys and provide good indices for biozonation. *Turkmeniceras* provides a good index of late Barremian age; *Deshayesites* and *Dufrenoyia* are used for the Lower Aptian biozonation.

The ammonite faunas of the Early Aptian of Aralar Mountain in north Spain have been studied recently (publication submitted, García-Mondéjar *et al.*, 2008). The reported genera and species permit a correlation of the successions in the Mediterranean Tethyan Belt. They demonstrate that the ammonite succession in the Kopet Dagh (Turkmenistan and north east Iran) at the opposite ends of the northern Mediterranean Tethyan belt (firmly established (Raisossadat, 2002), is uniform.

A *Deshayesites turkyricus* Zone had been proposed for the earliest Early Aptian. However, Raisossadat (2002) showed that *Deshayesites oglanlensis* was more

characteristic of this time interval and this revision was accepted by 1st International Workshop of the IUGS Lower Cretaceous Ammonite Working Group (Hoedemaeker *et al.*, 2003). This species could be traced throughout the Mediterranean basin. The assemblage of this Zone is closely comparable in the north Tethyan province successions in Spain, France and the Kopet Dagh (Turkmenistan and north east of Iran). The English *fissicostatus* Zone (Casey, 1961) can be correlated with the *Deshayesites oglanlensis* Zone.

The succeeding Early Aptian ammonite zone is the *Deshayesites weissi* Zone. The *weissi* Zone is established from the stratigraphical range of two species, *Deshayesites weissi* and *Deshayesites planus*. While *D. weissi* is known only from North Germany, Romania, the Greater Balkans, Taurkyr and Kubadag (Kopet Dagh), the latter species is more widespread. It is believed that the *weissi* Zone in Transcaspia can be correlated with the *forbesi* Zone (Casey, 1961) in England and the *weissi* Zone (Kemper, 1976) in Germany.

The *weissi* Zone is succeeded by that of *Deshayesites deshayesi*, a common species of *Deshayesites* distributed throughout most of the areas from which the genus is recorded. It is thus used widely as the index fossil of the penultimate Early Aptian zone. There is now general agreement that the *Deshayesites deshayesi* Zone of Casey (1961) corresponds to the *deshayesi* Zone of other European authors.

Dufrenoyia is a widely distributed genus and *D. furcata* is the index fossil for the latest Early Aptian in the Mediterranean region. Casey (1961) proposed for this interval an index fossil, *Tropaeum bowerbanki*, which is associated with species of *Dufrenoyia* in southern England. *Tropaeum* is a heteromorph ammonite and its facies is restricted and thus unsuitable as a widely recognisable index fossil. The distribution of Deshayesitidae family genera and their species in Mediterranean region will be discussed in this paper.

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Seyed Naser RAISOSSADAT

Geology Department
Birjand University, Faculty of Science
P.O.Box 97175/ 615, Birjand
Iran
e-mail: snaser_rais@yahoo.co.uk

Hugh G. OWEN

Department of Paleontology
The Natural History Museum
Cromwell Road
London, SW7 5BD
UK
e-mail: l.steel@nhm.ac.uk

J. GARCÍA-MONDÉJAR

Departamento de Estratigrafía y Paleontología
Facultad de Ciencia y Tecnología
Universidad del País Vasco, Apartado 644
48080 Bilbao
Spain
e-mail: joaquin.garciamondejar@ehu.es

Peter F. RAWSON

Department of Earth Sciences
University College London
Gower Street
London, WC1E 6BT
UK
e-mail: peter.rawson1@btinternet.com