

The authorship of the so-called ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’

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Abstract. The authorship of the so-called ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’, published anonymously in Vienna in 1775/1776, is discussed. In the interest of stability, it is contended that the work should be attributed to [Denis & Schiffermüller], as cited by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in Opinion 516 (1958). Moreover, evidence is provided showing that contemporaries of Ignaz Schiffermüller and Michael Denis also considered the work to have been written by ‘die Theresianer’, i.e. multiple authors, and not by Schiffermüller alone, as considered by some current authors.

Introduction

The authorship of the anonymously published, so-called ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’ has almost always been attributed to Michael Denis and Ignaz Schiffermüller. Moreover, the work was even attributed to these authors by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in Opinion 516 (Hemming 1958). However, in a recent paper, Kudrna & Belicek (2005) present what they consider to be ‘totally convincing’ evidence that Schiffermüller alone was the author. As we shall demonstrate, there are many flaws in their arguments and, as a consequence, we consider their conclusions to be incorrect.

The ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’

The famous ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’ of 1775/1776 was the most influential work on early European lepidopterology towards the end of the 18th century and has repeatedly been the subject of papers concerning its correct title, year of issue, authorship and availability of names. It was first published in 1775 under the title *Ankündigung eines systematischen Werkes von den Schmetterlingen der Wienergegend* and, a year later, as *Systematisches Verzeichniß der Schmetterlinge der Wienergegend*. Although the different titles suggest different editions the text was printed only once (Prout 1900: 158); however, there are two different frontispieces (Kudrna & Belicek 2005: figs 4, 5), two different title pages (Kudrna & Belicek 2005: figs 2, 7) and two different, mirror-reversed versions of the plates (both versions coloured and uncoloured). These were subsequently combined in several different ways, but as entomologists only ever had two or three copies available for comparison they believed that there existed different, clearly definable editions of the work (Sattler 1970; Wolff 1972).

Kudrna & Belicek call attention to a remarkable copy of the ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’ in the present library of the Theresianum in Vienna. That copy is unique in that it has both title pages (1775, 1776), the two known frontispieces, two mirror-reversed monochrome

plates and two mirror-reversed colour plates. A closer study would be worthwhile to establish whether it could have been Schiffermüller's working copy, as Kudrna & Belicek consider possible. It should be noted that in the library of the Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Senckenberg in Frankfurt there exists another interesting copy that initially belonged to J. C. Gerning (who is mentioned in the Nachtrag of the 'Wiener Verzeichnis' as the collector of several species from Frankfurt) and was later acquired by C. von Heyden. This copy is also accompanied by both title pages and additionally has a unique printed index of 29 pages with independent pagination (pp. 1–29), which lists, in double column, all the species in the 'Verzeichnis'. Although obviously intended to be alphabetical, the index is curiously jumbled with some individual names and even entire sections appearing out of sequence in unexpected places. The index is clearly of the same time as the 'Wiener Verzeichnis' but differs in the vignette at the top of each page. Promitzer (1990: 433) mentioned such an index as published in 1776; however, we do not know whether that information is based on the Frankfurt copy or whether there exists a second copy elsewhere.

The original water-colour illustrations may not have been executed by Schiffermüller himself (as Kudrna & Belicek, p. 4 imply) but were perhaps the work of Landerer (who was responsible for the two different frontispieces) and possibly other artists, as implied on p. 237 ('... um uns und *unsere* ... *Künstler* [plural] zu üben ...'). There is also a reference in Schröter (1776: Vorrede) according to which the illustrations will be made '... unter der Aufsicht [under the supervision] des Herrn Professor Schiefermüller ...'. In our opinion, Kudrna & Belicek (2005: 5) make too much of a distinction between editorship and authorship that was not as clear in the 18th century as it is today. Interpreting the words '*herausgegeben von* ...', meaning *issued by* ... [literally: *given out*], in modern terms as editor, editor-in-chief or scientific editor, is stretching it too far. We agree with them that these words do not clearly indicate two authors – nor, however, do they preclude the existence of two authors – but they certainly indicate that there was more than one author involved.

The fact that a copy in the Senckenberg library in Frankfurt has both title pages even led to speculation that only the *Systematisches Verzeichnis* existed, and that the title page *Ankündigung* had originally been merely part of a brief prospectus that was later added to the *Verzeichnis* by a librarian (Sattler 1970: 2). A similar copy with both title pages is present in the library of the Theresianum in Vienna (see above). But several copies having solely the *Ankündigung* title are also known (Kudrna & Belicek, 2005: 4) and it is evident that the book was originally distributed under that title.

There is no doubt that the *Ankündigung* was to announce a detailed work on the Viennese Lepidoptera to be entitled *Die Schmetterlinge der Wienergegend untersucht, und systematisch beschrieben*. The authors say so quite clearly in their introduction (pp. 5–9, I. Abschnitt. Entwurf des Werkes) where they discuss at length the layout of the work to come; they also give two sample plates (pls Ia, Ib) with detailed accompanying text (pp. 244–304) on the illustrated species. Schiffermüller had secretly begun to collect insects in 1757 (Promitzer 1990: 429; Speta 2003: 12), but when this became more widely known amongst his colleagues, he received such enthusiastic encouragement that he collaborated with others (especially his friend Denis) in about 1764 with the intention

of producing a comprehensive, well-illustrated work on the Lepidoptera of the Vienna district. By good fortune someone in their midst had artistic talent (and experience in architectural drawings) and undertook to draw the larvae from live specimens because their colours could not be preserved. Seven years later, on 16 March 1771, the foreword ('An den Leser') was dated, presumably on completion of the manuscript for the *Ankündigung* (pp. 1–304); as a result of long delays in press, a supplement ('Nachtrag', pp. 305–322) was added, followed by an unnumbered page with a few corrections of misprints and errors, before the book was finally published in 1775. By that time it had become clear that changed circumstances no longer permitted the completion of such an ambitious project (Denis, 1780), and that may have been the reason for changing the title from *Ankündigung* [announcement] to *Systematisches Verzeichniß* [systematic check list].

With regard to the title *Ankündigung* (rather than *Ankündigung*) it was quite unnecessary for Kudrna & Belicek (2005: 3) to pour scorn on Hemming for having meticulously marked the appearance of the word *Ankündigung* with '[sic]' wherever it occurred in Opinion 516. Moreover, it is also immaterial whether the noun *Ankündigung* was correct in the 18th century – Kudrna & Belicek erroneously refer to the 17th century – it is sufficiently unusual that the insertion of '[sic]' behind it, whilst perhaps a little pedantic, was by no means unjustified. After all, the Viennese authors themselves used the more usual standard German *Ankündigung* in the body of their text (p. 8) and so did their contemporaries such as the anonymous reviewer in the *Jenaische Zeitungen* (Anonymous 1775) and Schröter (1776) amongst others.

On this subject Hemming (1958: 20) stated reasonably enough:

Note on the title of the above work: The first word of the title of this work is commonly cited in the literature as being “Ankündigung”, though sometimes it appears in the shorter form “Ankündigung”. ... Inspection of the copy of this work in the Linnean Society of London shows however that the spelling used in its title is the archaic shortened form “Ankündigung” and not the longer form “Ankündigung” which would be employed today.’

Before accusing Hemming of being ‘obviously unfamiliar with the German language ...’, Kudrna & Belicek should have read Opinion 516 carefully and having done so ensured the accuracy of German words used in their own paper (e.g. ‘geistlicher Vater’ when ‘geistiger Vater’ was meant). Had Hemming not had a thorough knowledge of German, it would hardly have been possible for him to have done so much research on the ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’, or on the works of Hübner, Herrich-Schäffer, etc., which culminated in his two-volume magnum opus *Hübner* published in 1937.

The date of publication

In accordance with the provisions of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (Hemming 1958) established the *Ankündigung* as ‘published on an unspecified date after 17th May 1775 and before 8th December 1775’, the latter being the date when the work was first reviewed in *Jenaische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen* (not ‘gelehrnten’ as Kudrna & Belicek

write). This was the best evidence at the time and Kudrna & Belicek's contention that 'this decision is wrong' is itself disputable, because the date of Schiffermüller's letter to Linnaeus (11 September 1775) is still within that range. Had that letter materially affected the decision in Opinion 516, the Commission would have been informed of that fact at the time of its discovery (Sattler 1970).

The authorship

Who exactly is entitled to authorship or co-authorship of a scientific publication? Surely not just the person who finally puts pen to paper or, nowadays, finger to keyboard. In the present authors' view the authorship of a scientific work should primarily reflect the scientific responsibility for anything that is published! In determining the authorship of the 'Wiener Verzeichnis' we consider as paramount the wishes of the people involved, in particular those of Schiffermüller as the leading author. Schiffermüller's autobiography, which is preserved in manuscript form, leaves no doubt that he had only agreed to this enterprise after Denis promised his help. Collaboration between him and Denis grew extremely close, in fact, so much so that never was anything written up unless both of them were satisfied of its accuracy (Promitzer 1990: 432).

We also attach some weight to the views of contemporary authors who, almost without exception, considered the 'Wiener Verzeichnis' as the work of more than one author and, more specifically, as that of Schiffermüller & Denis or vice versa. With regard to the sequence of authors' names it should be noted that in the distant past senior/junior or first/second author has never played the role that it does nowadays in Anglo-Saxon countries; in fact, authors were frequently listed in alphabetical sequence and there were fewer, if any, squabbles over who should be cited first.

From the very beginning the contemporaries of Michael Denis and Ignaz Schiffermüller used almost exclusively the **plural** when talking of the authorship, as hardly any of them had any doubt about a multiple authorship of the 'Wiener Verzeichnis'. But the collection was usually, though not exclusively, considered as belonging to Schiffermüller; it went with him to Linz, where it was consulted by, amongst others, Schrank (in 1783), Fabricius (in 1784) and Hübner (in 1797), before Schiffermüller took it with him into his retirement in Waizenkirchen from where it was taken to Vienna after his death, only to be destroyed by fire in 1848. All that survives today are some duplicates that were given to Fabricius on the occasion of his visit to Linz (Karsholt & Gielis 1995: 32). Ironically, had attempts at that time succeeded in securing the collection for the British Museum (Speta 2003: 13) it would still be in existence!

There follows a sample of contemporary views on the authorship of the 'Wiener Verzeichnis'.

Anonymous (1775) refers to '[die]Herren Professoren Schiffermüller und Denis'.

Schröter (1776: Vorrede, pp. [i]–[xx], [xiv]–[xvii]) refers to 'Hr Professor Schiefermüller, und Herr Professor Denis'.

Esper (1776–[1830]: 1: 98, 190, 211; 2: 224) refers to 'Die Herren Verfasser [plural for 'Author'] des Verzeichnisses der Wiener Schmetterlinge ...'.

Denis (1780) refers to 'Schiffermüller und Denis'.

Schrank (1785), who visited Schiffermüller in Linz and consulted his collection, refers to ‘Herr Rath Schiffermüller’ and his system only, without mentioning Denis.

Illiger (1801: vii) refers to ‘Denis & Schiffermüller’ and ‘Das System der Wiener [plural] (unter dem Namen ist es allgemein bekannt.)’. When this new edition of the ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’ was published, Denis (1729–1800) had only just died whilst Schiffermüller (1727–1806) lived for another five years.

Ochsenheimer (1807: 12) refers to ‘... die Verfasser [plural] des Verzeichnisses der Schmetterlinge der Wiener Gegend ...’.

Fabricius (1819: 107) refers to ‘... die Verfasser [plural] des Verzeichnisses der Schmetterlinge der Wiener Gegend ...’. He mentions that he had met Denis (and other entomologists) in Vienna before proceeding to Linz specifically to see Schiffermüller and his collection, referring to him as ‘Der eigentliche Verfasser [the principle author] des Wiener Verzeichnisses, Schiffermüller ...’. We are aware that ‘Der eigentliche Verfasser ...’ might leave some room for interpretation but in the light of the simultaneous reference to ‘die Verfasser’ [plural] a few lines earlier we cannot translate it other than as principle or leading or main author.

Charpentier (1821: vii) refers to ‘... Sammlung Schiffermillers [sic]...’ and ‘... von Schiffermillers Hand geschriebenen Bestimmungen...’. Otherwise he refers quite consistently throughout the book to ‘... die Theresianer ... (der Theresianer, den Theresianern)’ (plural, e.g. pp. 39, 56, 81, 101, 150).

Zincken, genannt Sommer, in Charpentier (1821: Vorrede, p. xii) refers to ‘... Sammlung der Verfasser ...’ (plural).

Percheron (1837) lists the ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’ first under Denis (‘conjointement avec Schiffer-Muller [sic]’) (1: 82) and later under ‘Schiffer (Muller)’ (‘conjointement [sic] avec Denis’) (2: 39), in both instances referring to the *Verzeichnis* (although under slightly different titles) but citing it as published in 1775. Both entries are full of spelling errors.

Hübner (1816–[1825]) uses extreme abbreviations (‘Schiff. Verz.’) in the *Verzeichniss bekannter Schmettlinge*, but reference to other Hübner works shows that it was not meant to signify single authorship by Schiffermüller as Kudrna & Belicek (2005: 6) suggest. Hübner’s other works demonstrate that he was well aware of the multiple authorship. For example, in the *Systematisch-alphabetisches Verzeichniss* (1822: v) he specifically introduced the abbreviation ‘S’ for ‘Schiffermüller und Denis’: there is also ample reference to multiple authors (‘... die Herren Theresianer...’ [plural]) or even specifically to ‘Schiffermüller und Denis’ in the *Sammlung europäischer Schmetterlinge*.

Hübner made many references to the Wiener Verzeichniss in volumes 1 and 8 of his *Sammlung europäischer Schmetterlinge* (1796–[1836]), as follows:

1: [i]: ‘Die von ... den Herren Theresianern, Schiffermüller und Denis ... den Schmetterlingen ertheilten Namen ...’.

1: 3, footnote 3: ‘Diese Benennung [Schmetterlinge] führten schon die ehemaligen Herren Theresianer [plural!], durch ihr systematisches Verzeichniß der Schmetterlinge der Wienergegend ein, ...’. The very first species mentioned

in that volume is referred to as *Papilio Cynthia* der Theresianer [plural!], whilst in following species the authors are abbreviated to 'd. Ther.'

- 1: 124: 'Die Herren Theresianer, Schiffermüller und Denis ...'. In addition there is ample reference to 'die Herren Theresianer ...' [plural] throughout the text (e.g. pp. 6, 43, 45, 47, 61).
- 8: [3]: '... die Lehrer [plural] am ... Thesianum ...'.

In their eagerness to prove Schiffermüllers's sole authorship, Kudrna & Belicek have missed a rare but decisive document in which Denis himself lists his name as that of co-author. In a catalogue, published in 1780, of the 'Merkwürdigkeiten' [curiosities] in the Garelli library, of which Denis was at that time the librarian, he recorded, for the year 1776, 'Systematisches Verzeichniß der Schmetterlinge der Wienergegend, herausgegeben von einigen Lehrern am k.k. Ther. Verlegts Bernardi. gr. 4. von Schiffermüller **und Denis** [the present writers' emphasis].' Denis goes on to say that the continuation of that work had been interrupted for some years, as a result of Schiffermüller having been promoted to the directorship of the Nordisches Collegium in Linz (Denis 1780). Kudrna & Belicek (2005: 6) considered it as 'wholly inconceivable' that Schiffermüller, as a devout [not devote] Jesuit, would have denied Denis, his closest friend and brother Jesuit, the co-authorship if the latter had deserved such recognition, but one could argue with similar force that neither would Denis have usurped undeserved co-authorship.

As further evidence against Denis being a co-author, Kudrna & Belicek referred to the fact that Denis had left the Thesianum in 1773, two years before the publication of the *Ankündigung*. However, they overlooked the fact that the foreword ('An den Leser'), presumably written on completion of the manuscript, is dated 16 March 1771 and thus well before Denis had left his post. Moreover, in the *Nachtrag* (p. 305) reference is made to considerable delay during the printing process.

Whilst Schiffermüller might name a *Tinea denisella* (p. 138) in honour of his co-author, we consider it rather unlikely that this modest man, were he the sole author, would simultaneously name a *Tinea schiffermüllerella* (p. 142) after himself! We assume that the latter name was proposed by one of his collaborators, probably Denis.

Kudrna & Belicek (2005: 6) considered it noteworthy that Forster & Wohlfahrt (1952–1955) and Higgins & Riley (1970) had attributed authorship of the butterflies to Schiffermüller alone. However, Forster & Wohlfahrt were not specifically concerned with authorships¹; they used extreme abbreviations for all authors, and the usage of 'Schiff.' does not signify anything with regard to single or multiple authorship. Whilst it is true that Higgins & Riley attributed the names only to Schiffermüller in their first edition, and this is followed in several foreign editions, they switched to 'Denis and Schiffermüller' in their later editions (e.g. edn 4, 1980).

¹ Nor, for that matter, were they much concerned with the then current nomenclature/taxonomy, as witnessed in volume 3 of their work in which they raised to full genera, without explanation, various nominal subgenera in the genus *Zygaena* Fabricius!

Summary

Whilst we acknowledge that Kudrna & Belicek have produced an interesting and beautifully illustrated historical paper on the ‘Wiener Verzeichnis’, they have presented no convincing evidence that Schiffermüller was the sole author of the work. In contrast, it is shown in the present paper that, notwithstanding Schiffermüller’s leadership and monumental personal contribution, he did not see himself as the sole author, whilst his contemporaries also considered the book to be the work of more than one person and credited Denis with co-authorship. In the interest of stability, if not for historical accuracy alone, we suggest that the long-established (50 years) current practice of attributing the work (and all new names established therein) to Denis & Schiffermüller, as cited in Opinion 516, is adhered to.

We should point out that we do not wish to comment specifically on Kudrna & Belicek’s proposals with regard to the availability of certain butterfly names. But whilst each name has to be considered on its own merit, we call attention to the fact that the majority, if not all, of Denis & Schiffermüller’s names can be accepted as available (Sattler & Tremewan 1984). We urge lepidopterists to interpret the provisions of the *Code* as far as possible in favour of preserving the old established names and thereby contributing to stability. Moreover, we fail to understand where Kudrna & Belicek (p. 2) got the idea that Koçak (1982, 1984, 1986) and Sattler (1970 – not 1969!) rejected the *Ankündigung* for the purposes of zoological nomenclature – in fact, the exact opposite is the case. Koçak explicitly separated those names he considered available from those that he considered to be *nomina nuda*, whilst Sattler clearly indicated how to cite the species described in the *Ankündigung*.

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