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Citation

Sergeev, Vladimir N., Andrew H. Knoll, Natalya G. Vorob'eva, and Nina D. Sergeeva. 2016. "Microfossils from the Lower Mesoproterozoic Kaltasy Formation, East European Platform." *Precambrian Research* 278 (June): 87–107. doi:10.1016/j.precamres.2016.03.015.

Published Version

doi:10.1016/j.precamres.2016.03.015

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1 **Microfossils from the lower Mesoproterozoic Kaltasy Formation, East European**

2 **Platform**

3

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14

15 **Abstract**

16 Basinal shales of the lower Mesoproterozoic Kaltasy Formation, sampled from three

17 boreholes drilled into the southeastern East European Platform, Russia, contain abundant

18 and moderately well preserved microfossils. 34 distinct entities have been identified, most

19 assigned to simple sphaeromorphic or small filamentous taxa found widely and

20 characterized by long stratigraphic ranges. Ornamented microfossils found in coastal

21 successions of other lower Mesoproterozoic basins are absent, but large filamentous

22 microfossils interpreted as possible benthic photosynthetic eukaryotes are recorded,

23 drawing comparisons to relatively deep water shales in Siberia. In overall aspect, the

24 Kaltasy microfossils are consistent with other broadly coeval assemblages, but they

25 highlight the importance of environment, as well as age, in determining the distributions of
26 remains that record the early diversification of marine eukaryotes. *Rectia magna* is
27 described as a new species.

28

29 **Keywords:** Mesoproterozoic, microfossils, biostratigraphy, eukaryotes, East European

30 Platform

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34 **1. Introduction**

35

36 Recent paleontological and biogeochemical research has sharpened our
37 understanding of late Paleoproterozoic and early Mesoproterozoic marine ecosystems.
38 Silicified coastal carbonate facies offer a view of benthic microbes, including abundant and
39 diverse cyanobacteria (e.g., Zhang, 1981; Sergeev et al., 1995, 2007; Kumar and
40 Srivastava, 1995), while carbonaceous compressions in fine-grained siliciclastic lithologies
41 record both benthic and planktonic microorganisms across a range of lagoonal to basinal
42 environments (e.g., Prasad et al., 2005; Nagovitsin, 2009; Agić et al., 2015; Vorob'eva et
43 al., 2015). In many basins of this age, microfossils thought to be eukaryotic are largely
44 restricted to coastal waters (Javaux et al., 2001), and an explanation for this may lie in the
45 physical nature of mid-Proterozoic oceans. Geochemical data on iron-speciation, nitrogen
46 isotopes, and trace metal abundances and isotopes concur in suggesting the surface mixed
47 layer of mid-Proterozoic oceans lay above widespread and persistent anoxic water masses;
48 episodic upward mixing of these subsurface waters may have inhibited eukaryotic
49 diversification in open shelf environments (Anbar and Knoll, 2002; Johnston et al., 2009;
50 Stueeken, 2013; Guildbaud et al., 2015).

51 Although widespread, subsurface anoxia was not universal in mid-Proterozoic
52 oceans. Basinal shales in the lower Mesoproterozoic Kaltasy Formation, southeastern East
53 European Platform, preserve geochemical evidence that, at least to the depth recorded by
54 maximum flooding, water masses were oxic (Sperling et al., 2014). Here we report on
55 microfossils preserved in Kaltasy shales. The Kaltasy microfossil assemblage preserves
56 both cyanobacteria and eukaryotic microorganisms over a wider range of environments
57 than is typical for microfossils of this age. At the same time, conspicuously ornamented

58 taxa well known from other, broadly coeval basins are absent, prompting questions about
59 the spatial as well as the time distribution of early eukaryotic microfossils.

60

61 **PLACE FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE**

62

63 **2. Geological setting**

64

65 *2.1. Tectonic and stratigraphic framework*

66

67 For many years, Russian geologists have discussed Meso- and early Neoproterozoic
68 stratigraphy in terms of a Riphean stratotype located in the Bashkirian meganticlinorium, a
69 large structure on the western slope of the southern Ural Mountains (Chumakov and
70 Semikhatov, 1981; Keller and Chumakov, 1983; Fig. 1). The term Riphean, currently a
71 formal unit of Russian Stratigraphic Scale, was originally established to encompass a large
72 scale tectonic cycle, comparable to the Phanerozoic Caledonian or Hercynian orogenies
73 (Shatskii, 1964). Later, largely on the basis of stromatolitic assemblages, strata of
74 comparable age were recognized across much of Siberia and the term acquired its present
75 stratigraphic meaning. The Meso-Neoproterozoic succession in the Bashkirian
76 meganticlinorium records the eastern flank of an extensive sedimentary basin that probably
77 graded eastward into a continental margin; it can be correlated with confidence to strata in
78 platform aulacogen (graben, or rift) sections of the adjacent East European Platform. The
79 Uralian part of the basin, representing the margin *per se*, belongs to external part of the
80 Timanian orogeny, deformed in Ediacaran (Vendian) and Late Paleozoic time (Puchkov,
81 2013).

82 Regionally, the Mesoproterozoic to lower Neoproterozoic (Tonian and Cryogenian)
83 succession contains up to 15 km of weakly altered sedimentary and subordinate

84 volcanogenic rocks, divided into the Burzyan, Yurmata, Karatau and Arsha groups,
85 separated by unconformities (the Arsha Group, which occurs only on the eastern limb of
86 the Bashkirian meganticlinorium, was recently added to the Riphean as a result of new
87 isotopic data; Puchkov, 2005, 2013). The entire succession is overlain unconformably by
88 the Ediacaran (Vendian) Asha Group (Fig. 2).

89 On the western limb of the Bashkirian meganticlinorium, the lower
90 Mesoproterozoic (Lower Riphean) is represented by the Burzyan Group, traditionally
91 divided into the Ai (siliciclastic and volcanogenic rocks, 1500–2000 m thick), Satka
92 (predominantly carbonates 900–1800 m to 2000–2400 m thick, but thinning significantly to
93 the west), and Bakal (shale–carbonate unit, 900–1800 m thick) formations, in ascending
94 stratigraphic order. Their counterparts on the Bashkirian Meganticlinorian eastern limb are
95 the Bolshoi Inzer, Suran and Yusha formations, respectively.

96 In the Volgo-Ural region to the west, sub-surface Riphean stratigraphy is known
97 from core and geophysical data. The Kyrpy, Serafimovka and Abdulino groups correlate
98 with the Burzyan, Yurmata and Karatau groups, respectively (Fig. 2). The Kaltasy
99 Formation occurs within the Or'ebash Subgroup of the Kyrpy Group (Kozlov et al., 2009,
100 2011; Kozlov and Sergeeva, 2011). Kaltasy strata include mixed carbonates and shales,
101 correlated with the Satka Formation in the Ural Mountains (Keller and Chumakov, 1983;
102 Kah et al., 2007; Kozlov et al., 2009); the 1230 to 3600 m succession has been subdivided
103 into three conformable members: Sauzovo, Arlan and Ashit. The Sauzovo Member (105 to
104 816 m thick) consists largely of dolostones that locally contain stromatolites, along with
105 interlayers of dark gray to black shales and less frequent feldspar-quartz siltstones near its
106 base. The overlying Arlan Member (535 to 1216 m thick) is comprised of carbonaceous
107 shales (some of them fossiliferous) and subordinate siltstones, carbonates and dolomitic
108 marls. The Ashit Member (230 to 1550 m thick) consists of dolostones with stromatolite
109 horizons and thin interbedded shales. Fossiliferous samples come from shales of the Arlan

110 and Ashit members in three cores: 133 Azino-Pal'nikovo, 203 Bedryazh and 1 East Askino
111 (Figs. 1 and 2; Kozlov et al., 2011).

112

113 **PLACE FIGURE 2 NEAR HERE**

114

115 As described by Sperling et al. (2014), the Arlan Member in the 203 Bedryazh core
116 (and in 1 East Askino) consists almost entirely of dark, parallel laminated shales with
117 minor, commonly diagenetic micrite/dolomicrite. Clay-rich laminae predominate, with
118 thin intercalations that contain appreciable quartz silt. Fine sand grains of angular quartz
119 occur in some laminae; commonly these float in a finer matrix and may have been
120 transported into the basin by wind. No wave- or current-generated sedimentary structures
121 are present in more than a kilometer of stratigraphic thickness, suggesting persistent
122 deposition below storm wave-base. Consistent with this view, Kah et al. (2007) argued that
123 the 203 Bedryazh drill core penetrates some of deepest Arlan facies found in the entire
124 basin. Kah et al. (2007) also suggested that the cyclic granular dolostones and fine-grained
125 sandstones recovered by the 133 Azino-Pal'nikovo borehole record shallow water, high-
126 energy platform environments near the western limit of the Kama–Belaya aulacogen.
127 Although basinal environments in many lower Mesoproterozoic basins were anoxic, and
128 sometimes euxinic (Sperling et al., 2015, and references therein), Fe-speciation
129 geochemistry of the Kaltasy succession indicates oxic water throughout the range of depths
130 recorded by the succession (Sperling et al., 2014).

131

132 *2.2. Age of the Kaltasy Formation.*

133

134 The age of Kaltasy correlatives in the southern Ural Mountains is constrained by the
135 ~1380 Ma Mashak volcanics in the overlying Middle Riphean (Mesoproterozoic) Yurmata

136 Group (Puchkov et al., 2013; Krasnobaev et al., 2013a) and by ~1750 Ma basalts 200
137 meters above the base of the Ai Formation (Puchkov et al., 2012, Krasnobaev et al.,
138 2013b). More directly, a series of K–Ar dates obtained for glauconite from the Arlan
139 Member provides ages of 1510, 1520 and 1425 Ma in Borehole 3, Buranovo area; 1488 and
140 1469 Ma in Borehole 36, Arlan area; and 1358 and 1334 Ma in Borehole 191, Urustamak
141 area (Keller and Chumakov, 1983; all age estimates have an uncertainty of approximately
142 3%; Gorozhanin, personal communication, 2015). Illite from mudstone of the underlying
143 Norkino Formation penetrated by Borehole 20005 in the Karachevo area, is dated at
144 1400 ± 42 Ma by K–Ar (Gorozhanin, 1995), and K–Ar dates of 1368, 1377 and 1310 Ma
145 were obtained for whole-rock samples of gabbroids that intruded the overlying Nadezhdino
146 Formation (Keller and Chumakov, 1983). Recently Arlan shales were dated using
147 Rhenium-Osmium (Re-Os) geochronology, yielding depositional ages of 1414 ± 40 Ma and
148 1427 ± 43 Ma for two horizons near the base of the succession (Sperling et al., 2014). In
149 summary, all available geochronological data are consistent with early Mesoproterozoic
150 deposition.

151 Stromatolites in more proximal facies of the Kaltasy Formation are consistent with
152 geochronological data, recording forms found previously in lower Mesoproterozoic (Lower
153 Riphean) carbonates in the Southern Urals and Siberia (Kozlov et al., 1995).
154 Chemostratigraphic data likewise support an early Mesoproterozoic age (Kah et al., 2007).
155 Microfossils, however, were originally interpreted as supporting a younger age of
156 deposition. Veis et al. (2000) discovered an assemblage of large and relatively complex
157 microfossils in Kaltasy rocks that they termed the Pal'nikov microbiota. As the
158 assemblage differed from known microbiotas of the contemporaneous Satka and Omachta
159 formations, more closely resembling, at least broadly, younger assemblages from Siberia
160 and the southern Ural Mountains, Veis et al. (2000) proposed a Neoproterozoic age of
161 deposition. Since that time, however, both the longer stratigraphic range of many simple

162 Neoproterozoic microfossils and the importance of facies in Proterozoic micropaleontology
163 have become more fully appreciated (e.g., Sergeev, 1992, 2009; Sergeev et al., 1995, 2010;
164 Kah et al., 2007). Thus, as discussed below, Kaltasy microfossils are fully consistent with
165 an early Mesoproterozoic age.

166

167 **3. Materials and methods**

168

169 *3.1. Fossiliferous localities.*

170

171 Microfossils reported in this study occur in shale samples of the Arlan and Ashit
172 members of the Kaltasy Formation collected in 2011 by V.N. Sergeev during joint research
173 with A.H. Knoll, E.A. Sperling, N.D. Sergeeva and the late V.I. Kozlov. The samples were
174 taken from the 203 Bedryazh borehole core extracted near Bedryazh village in the Cis-Ural
175 area (Fig. 1; Google Map Coordinates, decimal degrees latitude and longitude,
176 56.340809°N, 55.475973°E) and repositied in the BIPiNeft' core storage facility near
177 Kungur; sample depth is shown in Fig. 2. Further Arlan samples come from the 1 East
178 Askino borehole drilled near Askino village in the Cis-Ural area (Fig. 1; 56.093889°N,
179 56.702778°E) and repositied in the Kuraskovo core storage facility on the outskirts of Ufa;
180 again, sample depths are shown in Fig. 2. Additionally, we examined nine samples of
181 Ashit shale collected by the late A.F. Veis from the 133 Azino-Pal'nikovo borehole (Fig. 1;
182 56.523374°N, 53.529541°E) obtained from southern Udmurtia, near Izhevsk and partially
183 described by Veis et al.(2000); sample depths are marked in Fig. 2.

184

185 *3.2. Methods of slide preparation and investigation.*

186

187 Microfossils were extracted from the shales by low agitation processing. After
188 standard sample processing using approximately 10% concentration (roughly one
189 tablespoon per 100 ml of water) of caustic potash, the shales were dissolved in hydrofluoric
190 acid (100%). Then, acritarchs and other microfossils were collected manually from the
191 residue by a needle using a stereomicroscope. This simple and effective technique avoids
192 the requirement for centrifugation and heavy liquid treatment, facilitating the intact
193 preservation of large microfossils (e.g., Grey, 1999, 2005; Willman and Moczydłowska,
194 2008; Sergeev et al., 2011). Slide-preparation methods were similar to those described in
195 many previous publications; permanent strew mounts were made using Canada balsam
196 mixed with polypropylene ether to inhibit recrystallization. Microfossils in the maceration
197 slides prepared by A.F. Veis were extracted from rock samples by chemical processing
198 using hydrochloric and hydrofluoric acids in a conventional palynological maceration
199 method, filtering the residue on a 90- μ m sieve mesh.

200 Transmitted-light photomicrographs were acquired using a RME-5 microscope
201 (Rathenower, Germany) equipped with a Canon EOS 300D digital camera (Canon, Tokyo,
202 Japan) and a Zeiss Axio Imager A1 microscope (#3517002390) equipped with an
203 AxioCamMRc 5 digital camera (both Carl Zeiss, Germany).

204 The microfossils reported in this study were measured using Zeiss Axio Imager A1
205 microscope Axiovision software. Where appropriate, taxonomic descriptions indicate the
206 mean (" μ ") and standard deviation (" σ ") for sample populations, the relative standard
207 deviation ("RSD", or standard deviation as a percent of the mean) and number of measured
208 specimens ("n") using SigmaPlot software.

209

210 *3.3. Repository of illustrated specimens.*

211

212 All specimens discussed and illustrated in this study are deposited in the
213 Paleontological Collection of the Geological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences
214 (PCGIN of RAS), Collection # 14712. The sample numbering from the 133 Azino-
215 Pal'nikov borehole by the late A.F. Veis corresponds to the borehole depth from which
216 samples were taken (Veis et al., 2000).

217

218 **4. Kaltasy microfossils: taxonomy and biological interpretation**

219

220 *4.1. General characteristics.*

221

222 The Kaltasy Formation contains abundant organic-walled microfossils of moderate
223 diversity. We recognize 34 distinct entities, largely of sphaeromorph, disphaeromorph and
224 netromorph acritarchs and filamentous forms (Fig. 3). Large and distinctive filamentous and
225 morphologically simple spheroidal fossils dominate the assemblage, including taxa previously
226 described from both lower Mesoproterozoic (e.g., the Lower Member of the Kotuikan
227 Formation, Anabar Uplift, Siberia; Vorob'eva et al., 2015) and upper Mesoproterozoic to
228 lower Neoproterozoic successions (e.g., the Lakhanda Group of the Uchur-Maya Uplift, the
229 Derevnya and Miroedikha formations of the Turukhansk Uplift, and the Inzer Formation of
230 the southern Ural Mountains; Yankauskas, 1989). Most of these taxa have simple
231 morphologies and long stratigraphic ranges, and so they are consistent with radiometric
232 constraints without further constraining depositional age. Ornamented acritarchs found in
233 upper Paleoproterozoic and lower Mesoproterozoic formations elsewhere (e.g., Yin, 1997;
234 Prasad et al., 2005; Nagovitsin, 2009; Adam, 2014; Singh and Sharma, 2014; Agić et al.,
235 2015) have not been identified in the Kaltasy assemblage. Thus, not surprisingly,
236 environment as well as age played a role in determining the composition of Mesoproterozoic
237 microfossil assemblages.

238

239

PLACE FIGURE 3 NEAR HERE

240

241 *4.2. Sphaeromorph, disphaeromorph and netromorph acritarchs.*

242

243 Unornamented spheroidal microfossils assigned to the form genus *Leiosphaeridia* are
244 abundant constituents of the Kaltasy assemblage. The simple observation that leiosphaerid
245 sizes range from a few microns to more than a millimeter indicates that diversity existed
246 within this component of the assemblage, but formalizing this by recognizing distinct
247 populations and assigning them to discrete species can be challenging because so few
248 characters are available. Yankauskas (1989) addressed this problem by classifying
249 Proterozoic *Leiosphaeridia* according to diameter and wall thickness, inferred on the basis of
250 folding and color pattern. Both color and folding geometry during compression can reflect
251 wall composition as well as thickness, and, of course, color varies as a function of diagenetic
252 temperature. Nonetheless, Yankauskas's framework has found widespread use and we adopt
253 it here as it captures much of the apparent diversity among these populations; we recognize *L.*
254 *jacutica* (Figs. 4.1, 4.6, 4.7; diameter 285-800 μm , wall more than 2 μm thick), *L. crassa*
255 (Fig. 4.2, the smaller fossil; diameter 65-70 μm , robust wall with a limited number of large
256 folds), *L. tenuissima* (Fig. 4.2, the larger fossil; diameter 125-135 μm , wall less than 0.5 μm
257 thick), *L. atava* (Fig. 4.5; diameter 360-365 μm , wall 1.5 μm thick), *L. minutissima* (diameter
258 10-60 μm , wall less than 0.5 μm thick; illustrated in Sperling et al., 2014, Fig. 4.14) and
259 *Leiosphaeridia* sp. (Figs. 4.8-4.10, diameter 135-410 μm , wall about 2 μm thick). We also
260 recognize *L. ternata* (Figs. 4.3, 4.4; diameter 120-190 μm) as a distinctive taxon based on its
261 nearly opaque wall and characteristic radial cracks. Both features are arguably diagenetic in
262 origin, but they appear to reflect a distinctive original wall composition.

263 Additionally, we consider a population of unusually large sphaeromorphs (diameter
264 800-1000 μm ; Fig. 4.11-4.13; see Section 7). Such large spheroids are commonly lumped
265 together in *Chuarina circularis*, but the Kaltasy fossils differ in key characters from the Grand
266 Canyon populations, including the lectotype designated by Ford and Breed (1973; see
267 discussion in Vidal and Ford, 1985). Specifically, the type population is characterized by an
268 unusually thick wall, with large, thick folds (Butterfield et al., 1994; see also Vidal, 1976),
269 whereas the Kaltasy fossils, while large, had thin walls marked by numerous fine folds. For
270 this reason, we assign the Kaltasy population to *Leiosphaeridia* (?) *wimani*, reflecting a
271 combination established by Butterfield (in Butterfield et al., 1994) for large, smooth, thin-
272 walled sphaeromorphs. Rare, dark sphaeromorphs with a spongy wall texture are assigned to
273 *Spumosina rubiginosa* (Fig. 5.1, diameter 150-250 μm ; Hofmann and Jackson, 1994). The
274 spongy texture is likely to reflect diagenetic alteration.

275 There is consensus that *Leiosphaeridia* species reflect a variety of biological origins,
276 nonetheless, leiosphaerids have commonly been interpreted as green algae, either the
277 phycomata of prasinophyte green algae (Tappan, 1980) or chlorophyte cell walls
278 (Moczyłowska, 2010; Moczyłowska et al., 2010). Leiosphaerids generally lack
279 ultrastructural features known to be associated with prasinophytes, but a distinctive TLS
280 (trilaminar sheath structure) ultrastructure has been recognized in TEM images of Cambrian
281 and Neoproterozoic specimens, supporting their interpretation as chlorophytes (Talyzina and
282 Moczyłowska, 2000; and, with less certainty, Moczyłowska et al., 2010). This, however,
283 does not mean that all spheroidal acritarchs were sourced by green algae, as potentially
284 preservable spheroidal envelopes are made by organisms ranging from cyanobacteria (e.g.,
285 Fairchild, 1985; Sun, 1987; Sergeev, 1992) to ciliates (e.g., Villalobo et al., 2003). Questions
286 of systematic affinity become more challenging in older successions, where the probability of
287 encountering extinct stem group lineages increases substantially. Mesoproterozoic
288 leiosphaerids examined to date do not show recognizably chlorophyte ultrastructures (Javaux

289 et al., 2004) and so, informed by molecular clocks (e.g., Parfrey et al., 2011; Eme et al., 2014),
290 the range of potential eukaryotic sources for these fossils must include undiagnostic crown
291 group green algae, stem group greens, stem group archaeoplastids (the photosynthetic group
292 that includes green, red, and glaucocystophyte algae), or stem group eukaryotes. In principle,
293 any or all could be represented in the Kaltasy assemblage. C29 steranes, widely accepted as
294 biomarkers for green algae, first become significant constituents of sedimentary organic
295 matter in Ediacaran strata (Knoll et al., 2007; Bhattacharya and Dutta, 2015); thus, if greens
296 are represented among Kaltasy and other early Mesoproterozoic microfossil assemblages, they
297 would appear to have played only a minor role in marine primary production. [Many
298 prasinophytes synthesize mainly C28 sterols, but C28 steranes are also rare or absent in
299 Mesoproterozoic rocks (Kodner et al., 2008).] Aggregates of relatively small (20-35 μm)
300 spheroidal vesicles are identified as *Synsphaeridium* sp. (Figs. 5.2 and 5.3, diameter 20-40
301 μm). The biological interpretation of this taxon is uncertain and could include cyanobacteria
302 as well as either planktonic or benthic eukaryotes.

303

304 **PLACE FIGURE 4 NEAR HERE**

305

306 Three more, broadly sphaeromorphic, disphaeromorphic and netromorphic
307 populations bear mention. First is *Pterospermopsimorpha pileiformis*, a form taxon applied to
308 spheroidal microfossils where one vesicle is encompassed by another. In Figs. 5.4, 5.5 and
309 5.7, this organization is clearly evident, and it supports the interpretation of these fossils as
310 photosynthetic. In all likelihood, at least one of the preserved walls was vegetative, and living
311 eukaryotes with continuous vegetative walls are nearly all photosynthetic or osmotrophic
312 (Margulis et al., 1990; Teyssèdre, 2006; Moczyłowska et al., 2011). Fig. 5.6 is also
313 tentatively assigned to *P. pileiformis*, but the internal body may represent shrunken cell

314 contents rather than a distinct wall layer. Found separately, if poorly preserved, the two
315 vesicles of *P. pileiformis* would be assigned to distinct *Leiosphaeridia* species.

316 We also note the presence of rare elongated vesicles with surfaces that include strips
317 twisted into spiral structures: *Spiromorpha* aff. *S. segmentata* (Figs. 5.8 and 5.9). Similar
318 forms were previously reported from lower Mesoproterozoic shales in China (Yin et al.,
319 2005) and India (Prasad and Asher, 2001), where they were compared to conjugating green
320 algae (Yin et al., 2005). The comparison, however, is broad, and molecular clocks suggest
321 a much later origin of conjugating streptophyte greens (Becker, 2013). Given its rarity and
322 relatively poor preservation, we leave the Kaltasy specimen in open nomenclature.

323 There are the rare, but distinctive microfossils assigned here to (?)*Moyeria* (Figs. 5.10,
324 5.11 and possibly 5.12). These large (nearly 200 μm in maximum dimension) vesicles have a
325 strikingly pleated surface of biological origin. The genus *Moyeria* was erected for distinctive
326 Ordovician and Silurian microfossils recovered from fluvial successions and interpreted as
327 the preserved pellicle of a euglenid protist (Gray and Boucot, 1989). Broadly similar
328 microfossils with longitudinal folds have been figured from nonmarine shales of the 1.1 Ga
329 Oronto Group, Michigan (Wellman and Strother, 2015). Whether these late Mesoproterozoic
330 fossils are euglenids or reflect broad morphologic convergence remains to be established.
331 Given that the Kaltasy fossils are both rare and still further removed from unambiguous
332 *Moyeria* by both time and environment, we remain uncertain of both their formal taxonomic
333 assignment and phylogenetic interpretation. Quite possibly, this fossil represents a new genus
334 and species, but formal evaluation of this awaits the discovery of additional specimens.

335 Finally, *Navifusa* is a genus name applied to elongate, or netromorph, acritarchs
336 (Hofmann and Jackson, 1994). These fossils are much larger than ellipsoidal fossils called
337 *Archeoellipsoides*, generally found in silicified carbonates and interpreted as the akinetes of
338 nostocalean cyanobacteria (Horodyski and Donaldson, 1980; Golubic et al., 1995; Sergeev et
339 al., 1995), as well as their at least partial counterpart in shales *Brevitrichoides* (Yankauskas,

340 1980). The specimen illustrated in Fig. 5.15 closely approximates *N. actinomorpha* from the
341 upper Mesoproterozoic Bylot Supergroup in Baffin Island (Hofmann and Jackson, 1994). The
342 partial specimen in Fig. 5.13 may also fit within this species, but the elongate form in Fig.
343 5.14 is distinct and can plausibly be interpreted as representing elongation at an early stage of
344 binary cell division. If correct, this would relate the specimen to *Leiosphaeridia* and provide
345 further evidence of a vegetative cell wall.

346

347

PLACE FIGURE 5 NEAR HERE

348

349 *4.3. Large filamentous forms.*

350

351 Large filamentous forms comprise large, relatively complex microfossils plausibly
352 interpreted as the remains of eukaryotic algae because they exceed the maximal width of
353 known cyanobacterial filaments (~100 µm; Schopf, 1992). Moreover, the constituent cells
354 of the filaments have continuous cell walls, strongly suggesting that the organisms were
355 photosynthetic or osmotrophic. Among living eukaryotes, filaments made of cells with
356 dimensions like those observed in the fossils tend to be photosynthetic, as osmotrophy
357 would be far more efficient with thin filaments such as those of fungal mycelia. They also
358 tend to be benthic. There is no inherent conflict between our interpretation of the
359 environmental setting as basinal and the hypothesis of photosynthesis. Today, benthic
360 multicellular algae grow beneath storm wave base, indeed, at depths greater than 200 m
361 (Littler et al., 1985).

362

363 Most important are two groups of large, broadly tubular microfossils with
364 transverse ribs or septa assigned to *Eosolena minuta* (Vorob'eva et al., 2015) and *Rectia*
365 *magna* sp. nov. Originally described from the upper Mesoproterozoic Lakhanda
Formation, the type species of *Eosolena*, *E. loculosa* (Hermann and Timofeev, 1985)

366 consists of uniseriate filaments, several millimeters long, with constituent cells up to 150
367 μm wide and variably constricted at prominent septum-like transverse walls (Yankauskas,
368 1989; Hermann, 1990; Hermann and Podkovyrov, 2009, 2014; Vorob'eva et al., 2015).

369 *Eosolena minuta*, originally described from the lower Mesoproterozoic Kotuikan
370 Formation, has smaller cells (up to 200 μm wide) but similar organization (Figs. 6.7-6.9;
371 Vorob'eva et al., 2015). For the reasons outlined above, these forms may record benthic
372 photoautotrophs (which does not necessarily make them crown group green algae; see
373 discussion of *Leiosphaeridia*).

374 *Rectia magna* sp. nov., is also large, exhibiting a broadly filamentous organization
375 that widens distally before tapering sharply at its terminus; the wall has thick transverse
376 annulations, ca. 5-7 μm wide (Fig. 6.1-6.6). The size of this population approaches the
377 maximum observed for cyanobacterial filaments, but its overall morphology suggests that
378 *R. magna*, like *E. minuta*, could have been eukaryotic and benthic. A few fossils (Fig.
379 6.10) exhibit broad features comparable to those of *Rectia* but also have a thin surface
380 covering that deforms into tight, thin folds, as observed in the genus *Plicatidium*
381 (Yankauskas, 1989). These may be taphonomic variants of *Rectia magna*; here we
382 differentiate them as *Plicatidium latum* following Veis et al.'s (2000) earlier identification.
383 *Rugosoopsis* sp. (Figs. 6.11 and 6.12) is the name given to non-branching, rigid tubes that
384 bear numerous cross ribs, in contrast to *Plicatidium*, which features elastic tubes bearing
385 cross ribs that are often folded along the primary axis. The affinities of all these fossils
386 remain obscure; however, their large size and relatively complex morphology support an
387 eukaryotic origin.

388

389

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390

391 *4.4. Filamentous microfossils.*

392

393 The Kaltasy microfossil assemblage contains abundant and moderately diverse
394 filamentous microfossils less than 100 μm in diameter, most of which can be interpreted in
395 light of the biology and taphonomy of cyanobacteria. Traditionally, uniseriate trichomes
396 with no cell differentiation were placed in the Oscillatoriales (Elenkin, 1949) or Subgroup
397 III (Rippka et al., 1979) of the Cyanobacteria. Molecular phylogenies now make it clear
398 that, as circumscribed, this group is not monophyletic (e.g., Giovannoni et al., 1988;
399 Schirromeister et al., 2015), but whether simple filamentous multicellularity evolved once
400 within the cyanobacteria and was lost several times (Schirromeister et al., 2015) or evolved
401 multiple times convergently (Ishida et al., 2001) remains a topic of debate. In either event,
402 the microfossil record of Subgroup III cyanobacteria is one of cellular trichomes, variously
403 well preserved, and extracellular sheaths, and so extant species assigned to *Lyngbya*,
404 *Oscillatoria*, and related genera provide a morphological basis for interpretation.

405 *Polytrichoides* aff. *P. lineatus* Hermann, 1974 (Fig. 7.1), which are bundles of
406 trichomes bound within a common cylindrical sheath, are usually compared with
407 polytrichomous filaments of the oscillatorian genera *Microcoleus*, *Hydrocoleum* or
408 *Schizothrix* (Hermann, 1990; Vorob'eva et al., 2015).

409 Trichomes composed of disc-like medial cells and rounded terminal cells without
410 encompassing sheaths -- comparable to extant *Oscillatoria* -- are placed in the genus
411 *Oscillatorioopsis*, represented in the Kaltasy assemblage by *O. longa* (Timofeev and
412 Hermann, 1979; Figs. 7.2, 7.6 and 7.7; 22.0-30.0 μm in cross-sectional diameter).

413 As exemplified by extant *Lyngbya*, simple trichomes can be encompassed by an
414 extracellular polysaccharide sheath. Sheaths can bear the imprint of trichome cells they
415 once contained, either as distinct collar-like annulations (*Cephalonyx* sp.; Fig. 7.4, 7.8) or
416 as regularly spaced pseudosepta (*Tortunema patomica*, Butterfield et al., 1994; Figs. 7.3,
417 7.5). Whether each of the form species recognized in the Kaltasy assemblage corresponds

418 to a distinct biological entity is uncertain; differing taphonomic circumstances could easily
419 account for some observed distinctions. Moreover, the boundaries between form genera
420 are porous; all tubular sheaths once contained trichomes and while the distinction between
421 sheaths containing well-preserved trichomes and empty tubes is straightforward, trichomes
422 exhibit a continuum of intermediate preservational states. Nonetheless, classification
423 adopted here captures the morphological variation found within the assemblage.

424 Taphonomic observation and experiments show that cyanobacterial sheaths
425 preserve better than the trichomes they contain (Sergeev and Krylov, 1986; Bartley, 1996),
426 and so tubular sheaths are more common in the Proterozoic fossil record than are
427 trichomes, including in the Kaltasy assemblage. Smooth, non-septate tubes are assigned to
428 the genus *Siphonophycus* (Schopf, 1968; Knoll et al., 1991) and partitioned into species on
429 the basis of size frequency distribution (Butterfield et al., 1994); on this basis, we recognize
430 five species (*S. robustum*, *S. typicum*, *S. kestron*, *S. solidum*, and *S. punctatum*; Fig.3),
431 found as individual fragments or loosely intertwined populations (Figs. 8.4-8.7).

432 Some cyanobacteria form true or false branches, and this can be recorded by
433 branched sheaths; in the Kaltasy assemblage we find scattered fragments of *Pseudodendron*
434 *anteridium* (Butterfield et al., 1994; Figs. 8.1-8.3) that arguably record nostocalean
435 cyanobacteria.

436 In general, then, filamentous microfossils record a diversity of cyanobacteria, many
437 of which lived on the oxic seafloor of the Kaltasy basin, but some of which could have
438 inhabited overlying surface waters.

439

440

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441

442 *4.5. Miscellaneous forms.*

443

444

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445

446 The Kaltasy assemblage contains additional populations that do not fit into the
447 aforementioned categories. Miscellaneous microfossils include *Pellicularia tenera*
448 (Yankauskas, 1980), relatively large and problematic fusiform vesicles with longitudinal,
449 intertwined thread-like filaments within the body (Figs. 8.8 –8.10), as well as five
450 populations left in open nomenclature. Unnamed Form 1 (Figs. 9.1-9.3) includes
451 translucent, irregular, elongated vesicles with a reticulate surface probably formed during
452 diagenesis. Unnamed Form 2 (Figs. 9.4-9.6) consists of opaque spheroidal vesicles with
453 irregular outlines. Vesicles appear to exhibit blunt conical processes, but we interpret these
454 as products of diagenesis. Unnamed Form 3 (Figs. 9.7 and 9.10) also appears to exhibit
455 small conical spines of uncertain and possibly diagenetic origin. Unnamed Form 4 (Figs.
456 9.8, 9.9, 9.11 and 9.12) is applied to elongate vesicles often arranged *en echelon*, with two
457 or three connected individuals. Vesicles are translucent to opaque, with a chagrinat
458 surface and, commonly, perpendicular cracks or transverse annulations in the equatorial
459 region. These morphological features are shared by *Pololeptus rugosus*, recently described
460 from Neoproterozoic deposits in China (Tang et al., 2013, see above). Nonetheless, we
461 have chosen to treat these microfossils informally because the transverse annulations could
462 be of diagenetic origin. And finally, Unnamed Form 5 (Figs. 9.13 and 9.14) consists of
463 elongated translucent solitary vesicles composed of two or three segments communicating
464 freely each to other and bearing elongated horn-like protrusions.

465

466

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467

468 **5. The Kaltasy microbiota in the Mesoproterozoic world**

469

470 All microfossil assemblages found in upper Paleoproterozoic to lower
471 Mesoproterozoic shales contain simple spheroidal acritarchs and most also contain
472 cyanobacteria-like filaments. Beyond this, however, they can be divided into three broad
473 groupings, based on fossil types not shared among all contemporaneous formations
474 (Vorob'eva et al., 2015). Type I assemblages lack conspicuously ornamented acritarchs
475 but contain abundant small coccoidal (e.g. *Ostiana*, *Myxococcoides*, *Synsphaeridium*) and
476 filamentous (e.g., *Siphonophycus*, *Leiotrichoides*, *Brevitrichoides*) microfossils not
477 exceeding a hundred microns in diameter; prokaryotic microorganisms account for much of
478 this diversity, as recorded in the Satka and Bakal formations of the southern Ural
479 Mountains and the Omachta and Svetly formations of the Uchur-Maya Region, Siberia
480 (Yankauskas, 1982; Veis and Semikhatov, 1989; Veis et al., 1990; Sergeev and Lee Seong-
481 Joo, 2001, 2004; Sergeev, 2006). Type II assemblages are characterized by the presence of
482 eukaryotic remains with processes or other conspicuous ornamentation, for example,
483 *Shuiyousphaeridium*, *Tappania*, *Valeria*, *Dictyosphaera* and *Satka favosa*. These taxa have
484 a wide geographic distribution, being reported from the Beidajiang and Baicaoping
485 formations of the Ruyang Group, China (Xiao et al., 1997; Pang et al., 2013; Agić et al.,
486 2015); the Roper Group, Australia (Javaux et al., 2001, 2004); the Chittrakut, Rampur and
487 Deonar formations of the Semri Group and the Bahraich Group, India (Prasad and Asher,
488 2001; Prasad et al., 2005; Singh and Sharma, 2014); the Newland Formation of the Belt
489 Supergroup, USA (Adam, 2014), and the Dalgokta and Dzhelindukon formations of the
490 Kamo Group, Central Angara Basin, Siberia (Nagovitsin, 2009). Type III microbiotas may
491 share some of the simple coccoids and filaments found in Type I biotas, but additionally
492 include large structures such as *Eosolena*, *Elatera*, and *Rectia magna*, as observed in the
493 Kotuikan and Ust'-Il'ya formations of the Anabar Uplift, Siberia (Veis et al., 2001;
494 Vorob'eva et al., 2015), and the McMinn Formation of the Roper Group, Australia (Peat et
495 al., 1978).

496 The Kaltasy assemblage clearly belongs to the Type III grouping. Morphologically
497 complex acritarchs are conspicuously absent, while large filaments like *Eosolena* and
498 *Rectia magna* are equally conspicuously present. The assemblages noted in the previous
499 paragraph are constrained by radiometric dating to fall within a single ca. 200 million year
500 time bloc, but we do not know that they are strictly coeval, leaving open the possibility that
501 differences among assemblages reflect evolutionary change. That said, we think it more
502 likely that differences among assemblages mainly reflect environmental distinctions.
503 Where assemblage composition has been tied to sedimentology and sequence stratigraphy
504 (e.g., Javaux et al., 2001; Vorob'eva et al., 2015), assemblages rich in ornamented
505 acritarchs tend to cluster in near-shore facies. The absence of such fossils in the Kaltasy
506 assemblage could thus reflect the open marine setting of these fossils. The large
507 microfossils that characterize Type III assemblages reflect benthos, probably
508 photosynthetic, growing on the seafloor. In many Paleoproterozoic and Mesoproterozoic
509 basins, basinal shales accumulated beneath anoxic and sometimes sulfidic waters,
510 restricting the environmental amplitude of benthic eukaryotes. In the Kaltasy basin,
511 however, basinal environments were oxic (Sperling et al., 2014), allowing eukaryotes to
512 flourish. Perhaps, then, these assemblages reflect a co-occurrence of moderate depth and
513 oxic waters not broadly observed in basins of this age. Consistent with this interpretation,
514 Type III assemblages of the Kotuikan Formation, Siberia, were deposited during maximum
515 flooding in shales that drape large stromatolitic bioherms; according to Vorob'eva et al.
516 (2015), deposition took place between storm and fair weather wave base. Iron speciation
517 chemistry is not available for this basin but the presence of large, apparently eukaryotic
518 benthos in shales deposited during maximum flooding implies oxic waters in relatively
519 basinal environments.

520 Sedimentological constraints for Type I assemblages are little explored, but it is
521 likely that all three major assemblage types and variations on these themes reflect

522 deposition along a gradient from near-shore, predominantly lagoonal facies to basinal
523 marine environments deposited beneath tens to more than a hundred meters of seawater.
524 Ecological variation along environmental depth gradients is characteristic of modern
525 oceans, and it has been documented previously in both younger and contemporaneous
526 Proterozoic basins (Knoll, 1984; Butterfield and Chandler, 1992; Javaux et al., 2001).
527 Diversity is commonly highest in mid-shelf environments that are neither restricted by
528 coastal environmental variation nor inhibited by anoxic subsurface waters that mix upward
529 in open marine settings (Veis, Petrov, 1994 a,b; Petrov, Veis, 1995). The hypothesis
530 proposed by Veis et al. (2000) that Kaltasy microfossils are distinct because of their
531 Neoproterozoic age is falsified by radiometric age constraints as well as chemostratigraphic
532 data. Our work, however, helps to explain *why* Veis could have been misled (see also
533 Sergeev et al., 1995), including a greater appreciation that many Proterozoic acritarchs
534 have long stratigraphic ranges and the local, environmentally mediated absence in Veis'
535 assemblages of those few morphologically complex taxa that do seem to be restricted to
536 lower Mesoproterozoic rocks. Paradoxically, associations of evolutionarily conserved
537 cyanobacteria may prove biostratigraphically informative in some Mesoproterozoic
538 successions, because they are closely tied to physical environments that themselves are
539 limited in time (Knoll and Sergeev, 1995; Sergeev et al., 1995; Sergeev, 2006, 2009).

540

541 **6. Conclusion**

542

543 The microbiota of the lower Mesoproterozoic Kaltasy Formation, Cis-Ural Area, East
544 European Platform contains a moderately diverse assemblage of (cyano)bacterial and
545 eukaryotic microorganisms. Kaltasy shales are unusual among Mesoproterozoic strata in
546 recording a depositional environment that was both basinal (but within the photic zone) and
547 oxic, and this helps to explain the distinctive features of Kaltasy microfossils. Thus, the

548 Kaltasy microfossils provide a fresh reminder that Proterozoic microfossils vary as a function
549 of both time and space, and inferences about evolution or biostratigraphy cannot be drawn in
550 the absence of information about the physical and chemical dimensions of depositional
551 setting. That relatively large multicellular remains occur in basinal, oxic environments
552 indicates that aspects of early eukaryotic evolution may have occurred in environments not
553 commonly sampled by paleontologists (a similar argument has been made concerning early
554 evolution in non-marine environments; Wellman and Strother, 2015). In general, sharper
555 paleoenvironmental and radiometric constraints on informative microfossil assemblages will
556 help us to build a better evolutionary and biostratigraphic understanding of life in mid-
557 Proterozoic oceans

558

559 **7. Systematic paleontology**

560

561 *7.1. Location of specimens within maceration slides*

562

563 Figure legends identify the slide containing the fossil, borehole and sample number,
564 location of the specimen within the fossiliferous maceration slide (denoted by the number
565 of the point above the specimen on an overlay-map attached to the palynological slide and
566 by England Finder Slide coordinates for the specimen), and the catalog number of the
567 specimen in the GIN paleontological collection. Thus, for the specimen of *Pseudodendron*
568 *anteridium* shown in Fig. 8.3, (203B)-40-3, p. 1, E57[3], 14712-86 indicates that the
569 illustrated fossil is from 203 Bedryazh borehole (for borehole index abbreviations see
570 caption to Fig. 1) and occurs in maceration slide 40-3, prepared from rock sample 40
571 obtained from the Kaltasy Formation (Fig. 2); that within this maceration slide, the fossil
572 occurs at location point 1 and within the England Finder Slide E57[3] area; and that the
573 specimen itself is cataloged as GINPC 14712-86. For the samples collected by the late

574 A.F. Veis from the 133 Azino-Pal'nikov borehole, sampled intervals are indicated by
575 sample number. Thus, for the specimen of *P. anteridium* shown in Fig. 8.2, (133AP)-2760-
576 2765-1, p. 4, H36[3], 14712-2764, the sampled interval is 2760-2765.

577 In this study, we provide the descriptions of new and key importance for Proterozoic
578 paleobiology and biostratigraphy as well as for the taxonomy of the Kaltasy taxa. Well-
579 known and broadly distributed/ long-ranging taxa are not described in detail; however, their
580 morphometric characteristics are briefly provided above.

581

582 7.2. *Sphaeromorph, disphaeromorph and netromorph acritarchs*

583 Genus *Leiosphaeridia* Eisenack, 1958, emend. Downie and Sarjeant, 1963

584 *Type species: Leiosphaeridia baltica* Eisenack, 1958

585 *Leiosphaeridia (?)wimani* Brotzen, 1941, emend. and comb. Butterfield (in Butterfield et al.,
586 1994)

587 Figures 4.11, 4.12, and 4.13

588 Das Fossil aus der Visingsögrube Wiman, 1894, pl. 5, Figs. 1-5.

589 *Chuarina wimani* Brotzen, 1941, p. 258-259.

590 *Kildinella magna* Timofeev, 1969, p. 14, pl. 6, Figs. 4-5.

591 *Chuarina circularis* Walcott, 1899 (partim): Ford and Breed, 1973, pl. 62, Fig. 3.

592 *Shouhsienia shouhsienensis* Xing (Hsing) in Zhang et al., 1991 p. 120, pl. 1, Figs. 16-26.

593 *Chuarina wimani* Butterfield in Butterfield et al., 1994, p. 42-43, Figs. 13D-13F (see Zhang et al., 1991, for
594 additional synonymy).

595 *Description:* Spheroidal vesicles 800-1000 μm in diameter; walls translucent, about 0.5-1.0
596 μm thick; surface texture smooth or fine-grained, with numerous fine folds oriented
597 subparallel to cell margin.

598 *Material examined:* Nine well-preserved specimens.

599 *Occurrence:* Widely distributed in Proterozoic rocks.

600 *Remarks:* *Chuarina* is a formal taxon incorporating large spherical microfossils with robust
601 opaque walls that are the remains of either unicellular eukaryotic cells or empty envelopes

602 of prokaryotic colonies (See Vidal and Ford, 1985; Fairchild, 1985; Yankauskas, 1989;
603 Butterfield et al., 1994; Sergeev, 2006; Sergeev et al., 2012 for additional discussion).
604 Based on SEM observations of material from the type locality, Butterfield in Butterfield et
605 al., 1994, suggested that *Chuarina* should be restricted to spheroidal fossils with wall thicker
606 than 2 μm . We follow the Butterfield et al., 1994, classification here; uncertainty about
607 species attribution reflects a broader uncertainty about how many species of exceptionally
608 large *Leiosphaeridia* may exist.

609

610 *Leiosphaeridia* sp.

611 Figures 4.8 – 4.10

612 *Description:* Solitary, spheroidal, single-walled vesicles 140 to 390 μm in diameter with
613 robust, translucent, chagrinat walls 2 μm thick that are commonly ruptured and exhibit
614 what may be biological openings ($n = 8$, $\mu = 225 \mu\text{m}$, $\sigma = 103$, $\text{RSD} = 45\%$). Some vesicles
615 contain a spheroidal cyst-like inclusion up to 350-370 μm in diameter, with a translucent
616 wall 0.5-1.0 μm thick (Fig. 4.9). Vesicle surface fine-grained and smooth, with occasional
617 possible striations.

618 *Material examined:* Eight well-preserved specimens.

619 *Discussion:* Members of the genus *Leiosphaeridia* are among the most commonly
620 occurring sphaeromorph acritarchs known from Precambrian sediments. Like *Valeria*, this
621 population shows both medial splits and, occasionally, a striation-like surface pattern.
622 Recently Pang et al. (2015) suggested that in *Valeria* the striation-like surface functioned as
623 a mechanism to guide biologically programmed excystment through medial split. In our
624 specimens, however, possible striations could be diagenetic, and so we prefer to classify
625 this form as *Leiosphaeridia* sp.

626

627 (?) Genus *Moyeria* Thusu, 1973

628 *Type species: Moyeria cabottii* (Cramer, 1970), emend. Miller and Eames, 1982

629 (?)*Moyeria* sp.

630 Figures 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12?

631 Leiosphaerid with multiple folds: Sperling et al., 2014, Figs. 4.4 and 4.4a

632 *Description:* Vesicle ellipsoidal, fusiform or spindle-shaped; wall consisting of 14 well

633 developed pleats twisted spirally and oriented parallel to the vesicle's longitudinal axis.

634 Pleats overlapping without intermediate space, but also without septa or diaphragm.

635 Vesicle 240 μm long and 200 μm wide; pleats 5-18 μm wide. Vesicle translucent, with

636 psilate surface; wall about 1 μm thick.

637 *Material examined:* One well-preserved specimen and another problematic vesicle.

638 *Remarks:* This form is similar to *Moyeria* species described from the Paleozoic deposits

639 (Molyneux et al., 2008; Le Hèrissè et al., 2013) and interpreted as euglenid pellicles.

640 However, only one well-preserved specimen has been found and therefore we defined it as

641 (?)*Moyeria* sp. Whether it bears any close phylogenetic relationship to Paleozoic

642 populations is unclear.

643

644 Genus *Navifusa* Combaz et al., 1967

645 *Type species: Navifusa bacilla* (Deunff, 1955).

646 *Navifusa* sp.

647 Figures 5.13 – 5.15

648 *Description:* Solitary single-layered nonseptate ellipsoidal vesicles with rounded ends.

649 Vesicle walls translucent to opaque, coarse-grained, 1.0-2.0 μm thick. Ellipsoids 300-550 μm

650 long and 190-375 μm wide (n=3); length/width ratio 1.7-1.5.

651 *Material examined:* Nine variously preserved specimens.

652 *Remarks:* These ellipsoidal microfossils from the Kaltasy Formation were identified in open

653 nomenclature as *Navifusa* sp. They are larger than ellipsoidal akinetes of nostocalean

654 cyanobacteria *Archaeoellipsoides* (= *Brevitrichoides*), which can be abundant in
655 Mesoproterozoic peritidal facies (Sergeev et al., 1995); most likely, the Kaltasy specimens are
656 the remains of eukaryotic microorganisms. We cannot exclude the possibility that some
657 specimens assigned to *Navifusa* sp. (e.g., Fig. 5.14) are sphaeromorphic vesicles elongated in
658 an early stage of binary cell division.

659

660 Genus *Pterospermopsimorpha* Timofeev, 1966, emend. Mikhailova and Yankauskas, in
661 Yankauskas, 1989

662 *Type species: Pterospermopsimorpha pileiformis* Timofeev, 1966

663 *Pterospermopsimorpha pileiformis* Timofeev, 1966, emend. Mikhailova, in Yankauskas,
664 1989

665 Figures 5.4 – 5.7

666 *Pterospermopsimorpha pileiformis* Timofeev, 1966, p. 34, pl. 5, Fig. 12; Mikhailova in Yankauskas, 1989, p.
667 49–50, pl. 3, Figs. 7 and 8; Veis and Petrov, 1994a, pl. 3, Fig. 15; Sergeev and Lee Seong-Joo, 2004, p. 18, pl.
668 3, Figs. 1–3, and 9; Sergeev, 2006, p. 231, pl. 30, Figs. 1-3, and 8; Sergeev et al., 2008, pl. 7, Figs. 1 and 2;
669 Sergeev and Schopf, 2010, p. 395, 396, Figs. 15.1, 15.2, 15.4, and 15.5; Vorob'eva et al., 2015, p. 217, 218,
670 Figs. 8.7, 8.9, and 8.10.

671 *Description:* Solitary spheroidal vesicles 110 to 315 μm in diameter ($n = 7$, $\mu = 130\mu\text{m}$, $\sigma =$
672 96, RSD = 74%), defined by single-layered, 0.5- to 1.0- μm -thick, medium-grained walls,
673 which contain a large, opaque, more or less spheroidal body 95-180 μm in diameter ($n = 8$,
674 $\mu = 123\mu\text{m}$, $\sigma = 38$, RSD = 30%), with a chagrinata superficial texture.

675 *Material examined:* Fifteen moderately well-preserved specimens.

676 *Occurrence:* Widely distributed in Meso- and Neoproterozoic microfossil assemblages.

677 *Remarks:* A well-known disphaeromorph acritarch, *Pterospermopsimorpha*, differs from
678 sphaeromorph acritarchs by the presence a dark robust cyst-like inner body approximately
679 2/3 of the outer vesicle diameter. *Pterospermopsimorpha pileiformis* differs from other
680 species of *Pterospermopsimorpha* by its vesicle size and by the chagrinata surface of the

681 inner body (Yankauskas, 1989). The specimen illustrated to Fig. 5.7 is similar to *Simia*,
682 with a flap-like membrane surrounding an inner translucent body, but it also could turn out
683 to be poorly preserved *Leiosphaeridia* with a collapsed inner envelope layer.

684 *Pterospermopsimorpha* and the morphologically similar, predominantly Paleozoic
685 taxon *Pterospermella* are commonly interpreted as phycmata of prasynophyte algae
686 (Teyssédre, 2006; Moczyłowska et al., 2011). This is reasonable for Paleozoic forms, but
687 morphology in Proterozoic populations assigned to *Pterospermopsimorpha* is generally
688 quite simple and so might have been generated by a number of distinct groups (e.g.,
689 amoebas, see Margulis et al., 1983, Figs. 5D, 5H and 20B). Teyssédre (2006) considered
690 that the name *Pterospermopsimorpha* was a waste-basket for many Precambrian acritarchs
691 in which the so called wings are actually degraded protoplasmic residues. Not surprisingly,
692 *Pterospermopsimorpha* has been reported from numerous silicilastic units ranging in age
693 from early Mesoproterozoic through late Neoproterozoic. Disphaeromorphic
694 *Pterospermopsimorpha*-like morphologies are common among Proterozoic silicified
695 chroococcacean cyanobacteria where a central translucent sphere formed as a result of an
696 inner sheath layer during post-mortem alteration (e.g., Knoll and Golubic, 1979, Fig. 6A-E;
697 Sergeev, 2006, pl. 26, Figs. 1-9; pl. 40, Figs. 11, 12 and 15; pl. 41, Figs. 2 and 3; Sergeev et
698 al., 2012, pl. 7, Figs. 1-6; pl. 8, Figs. 9, 10 and 13).

699
700 Genus *Spiromorpha* Yin et al., 2005

701 Type species: *Spiromorpha segmentata* (Prasad and Asher, 2001)

702 *Spiromorpha* aff. *S. segmentata* (Prasad and Asher, 2001) emend. and comb. Yin et al.,

703 2005

704 Figures 5.8 and 5.9

705 *Navifusa segmentatus* Prasad and Asher, 2001, p. 77, pl. 5, Figs. 4, 5, 14 and 15.

706 *Spiromorpha segmentata* Yin et al., 2005, p. 57, 60, Figs. 5.1, 5.4-5.8.

707 *Description:* Vesicle ellipsoidal, straight, empty inside, consisting of 7-12 strips twisted
708 helically from one end to the other. Strips connected closely without any intermediate
709 space and without septa or diaphragm in the vesicle interior, but with prominent connecting
710 welds forming upraised crescent-like structures (Fig. 5.9, marked by arrows). Vesicle
711 length about 125 μm , vesicle width 45-55; spiral strips 7.5–9.5 μm wide, welds 0.5-1.5 μm
712 and upraised 1.5-2.5 μm above main vesicle body. Vesicle surface smooth; wall fine
713 grained about 1 μm thick.

714 *Material examined:* One indifferently preserved specimen.

715 *Remarks:* The Kaltasy form is similar to *S. segmentata*, but differs slightly in the presence
716 of upraised welded zones connecting adjacent strips. *Spiromorpha segmentata* has been
717 reported from the middle part of the Beidajian Formation, upper Mesoproterozoic Ruyang
718 Group, Shanxi Province, China, and the Sarda and Avadh formations of the Ganga Basin,
719 India (Prasad and Asher, 2001). *Spiromorpha* has compared to modern conjugating green
720 algae, but this comparison is superficial, and molecular clock inferences suggest that
721 conjugating algae diverged as much as 700 million years after the time of Kaltasy
722 deposition (Becker, 2013). We previously identified this Kaltasy specimen as
723 *Brevitrichoides bashkiricus*, misled by its poor preservation (Sperling et al., 2014, Figs. 4.6
724 and 4.6a).

725

726 7.3. Large filamentous forms

727 Genus *Eosolena* Hermann in Hermann and Timofeev, 1985

728 *Type species:* *Eosolena loculosa* Hermann (in Hermann and Timofeev, 1985).

729 *Eosolena minuta* Vorob'eva and Sergeev in Vorob'eva et al., 2015

730 Figures 6.7 – 6.9

731 *Eosolena loculosa* Hermann in Hermann and Timofeev, 1985 (partim): Veis et al., 2001, Fig. 2 ж.

732 Large trichome-like fossils: Veis and Petrov, 1994a, pl. 3, Figs. 1-3, 8, 10, 11, and 13; Veis et al., 2001, Fig. 2 т.

733 *Eosolena minuta* Vorob'eva and Sergeev in Vorob'eva et al., 2015, p. 215, Figs. 6.3-6.5.

734 *Description:* Compressed, unbranched tubes separated by cross-ribs into partially isolated
735 isometric chambers that communicate freely each with each other. Tubes with 90-160 μm
736 cross-sectional diameters, up to 360 μm long (incomplete specimen); tube walls translucent,
737 variably constricted at prominent transverse walls, medium-grained, ca. 1-2 μm thick. Cross-
738 ribs opaque, 3-5 μm (possibly up to 9 μm , but this isn't clearly visible) wide and 2-10 μm
739 high; distance between cross-ribs ranges from 20 to 30 μm .

740 *Material examined:* Five variously preserved specimens.

741 *Occurrence:* Early Mesoproterozoic: Kotuikan Formation, Anabar Uplift, Siberia; Kaltasy
742 Formation, Cis-Urals area, East European Platform.

743 *Remarks:* *Eosolena minuta* differs from *E. loculosa* and from *E. anisocyta* Hermann (in
744 Hermann and Timofeev, 1985) in the smaller cross-sectional diameter of tubes: 75-205 μm
745 vs. 200-800 and 450-750 μm , respectively, and from *E. anisocyta* in a lack of clear
746 separation of the thallus into chambers (Yankauskas, 1989).

747

748 Genus *Plicatidium* Yankauskas, 1980

749 *Type species:* *Plicatidium latum* Yankauskas, 1980

750 *Plicatidium latum* Yankauskas, 1980

751 Figure 6.10

752 *Plicatidium latum* Yankauskas, 1980, p. 109, 110, pl. 12, Fig. 15; Yankauskas, 1989, p. 139, pl. 41, Figs. 3
753 and 4; Veis et al., 2000, pl. 2, Fig. 10; Sergeev et al., 2007, pl. 1, Fig. 19; Pang et al., 2015, Figs. 2A and 2B;
754 Vorob'eva et al., 2015, p. 216, Figs. 6.6-6.9.

755 *Description:* Compressed, unbranched tubes with thin elastic walls bearing numerous elastic
756 cross-ribs or fine folds broadly perpendicular to the tube axis. Tubes 160-170 μm in cross-
757 sectional diameter, up to 135 μm long (incomplete specimen); tube walls translucent,
758 medium-grained, ca. 1 μm thick. Ribs opaque, 1.0-2.0 to 3-4 μm wide and 0.5-1.5 μm high;
759 distance between ribs ranges from 5.5 to 7.5 μm .

760 *Material examined*: Two well-preserved specimens.

761 *Occurrence*: Widely distributed in Proterozoic microfossil assemblages.

762 *Remarks*: We do not accept the emendation and merging of *Plicatidium* and *Rugosoopsis*

763 suggested by Pyatiletov, 1988 and Butterfield et al., 1994, as both the details of

764 morphology and mechanical properties of the two entities differ (rigid vs. elastic tubes; see

765 Sergeev et al., 2007 and Vorob'eva et al., 2015, their Figs. 4C and 4D). Recently Pang et

766 al., 2015 suggested a secondary origin for *Plicatidium* folds.

767

768 **PLACE FIGURE 10 NEAR HERE**

769

770 Genus *Rectia* Yankauskas, 1989

771 *Type species*: *Rectia costata* (Yankauskas, 1980) comb. Yankauskas, 1989

772 *Remarks*: *Rectia* was erected by Yankauskas in 1989 on the basis of sheaths with

773 annulations earlier described as *Siphonophycus costatus* (Yankauskas, 1980, 1982). The

774 genus suffered many subsequent revisions and was considered as a junior synonym of

775 *Cephalonyx* (Butterfield et al., 1994) or *Rugosoopsis* (as *Siphonophycus costatus*,

776 Moczydlowska, 2008). We consider *Rectia* to be a distinct morphological entity, differing

777 from *Rugosoopsis* by its pseudocellular, filamentous nature (in contrast to rugose surface of

778 *Rugosoopsis* and *Plicatidium*) and by its paired ring-like annulation (in contrast to large

779 isometric cells or cell-casts of *Cephalonyx*). Earlier, similarly large pseudocellular

780 filaments were described as *Striatella coriaceae* Asseeva (in Asseeva and Velikanov,

781 1983), but an earlier homonym (Mädler, 1964) renders this generic name illegitimate (see

782 Butterfield et al., 1994). *Botuobia* Pyatiletov, 1979 is another genus of morphologically

783 similar filamentous microfossils embracing mainly sheaths with trichome cell imprints of

784 large diameter. *Botuobia magna* (Tynni and Donner, 1980) exceeds 100 μm in diameter

785 but is still smaller than *Rectia magna*; moreover, its surface is covered with septate cell

786 casts without doubled annulations. Veis et al. (2000) identified these microfossils as
787 *Botuobia*, a taxon now considered to be a junior synonym of *Tortunema* (Butterfield in
788 Butterfield et al., 1994). Therefore, we have chosen describe the Kaltasy remains as a new
789 species of *Rectia*. *Rectia magna* is probably the remains of eukaryotic filamentous
790 microorganisms (Fig. 10). Some *Rectia* specimens superficially resemble the tightly coiled
791 filaments of *Obruchevella* or *Spiromorpha*, but the bispiral pattern observed in these genera
792 is not traceable in the tubes with prominent doubled annulations. Nor does it appear that the
793 annulations originated as tubes rather than as reinforced sheets.

794

795 *Rectia magna* Sergeev, Knoll and Vorob'eva new species

796 Figures 6.1-6.6

797 *Botuobia* spp.: Veis et al., 2000, pl. 2, Figs. 9, 11, 13 and 20.

798 Ex gr. *Botuobia*: Veis et al., 2000, pl. 3, Fig. 5.

799 *Diagnosis*: A species of *Rectia* with cross-sectional diameter 70-200 μm .

800 *Description*: Compressed, unbranched tubes tapering sharply at its terminus, with prominent

801 doubled annulations separated by thin-walled intervals. Cross sectional diameter 70-200 μm

802 ($n = 7$, $\mu = 132\mu\text{m}$, $\sigma = 43$, $\text{RSD} = 32.5\%$); tubes up to 250 μm long (incomplete specimens);

803 tube walls translucent, medium-grained, ca. 1-2 μm thick. Pseudocellular, opaque, granulated,

804 double annulations 3.0-10.5 μm wide ($n = 37$, $\mu = 6.5\mu\text{m}$, $\sigma = 2.3$, $\text{RSD} = 35\%$) and possibly

805 2-3 μm high with intervening areas 1.5-3.5 μm and 0.5-2.0 μm wide between doubled

806 annulations and within pairs of annulations (when visible), respectively.

807 *Etymology*: From Latin *magna* – large, great, with reference to the taxon's large size

808 compared with previously described species of *Rectia*.

809 *Type*: Figure 6.3, GINPC 14712-5408, borehole 133 Azino-Pal'nikovo, 2052 m depth (See

810 Veis et al., 2000, pl. 3, Fig. 5).

811 *Material examined*: Seven well-preserved and additionally poorly preserved specimens.

812 *Occurrence:* Lower Mesoproterozoic, Kaltasy Formation, Cis-Urals area, East European
813 Platform.
814 *Remarks:* *Rectia magna* is closely similar to *R. costata* Yankauskas (1980) in morphology
815 and, in principle, the two could reflect a single biological entity. Two considerations
816 prompt us to diagnose a new species of *Rectia*: the ages of the Kaltasy *Rectia* and *R.*
817 *costata* do not overlap (500 million year difference), and the size distributions of the two
818 populations do not overlap (70-200 μm for *R. magna* vs. 35 μm for *R. costata*). These
819 considerations are challenging for the hypothesis of biological uniformity, and so we prefer
820 keep these species separate, following common practice in paleobotany.

821

822 Genus *Rugosoopsis* Timofeev and Hermann, 1979823 Type species: *Rugosoopsis tenuis* Timofeev and Hermann, 1979824 *Rugosoopsis* sp.

825 Figures 6.11, 6.12

826 *Rugosoopsis* sp.: Sperling et al., 2014, Fig. 4.13.

827 *Description:* Compressed, unbranched rigid tubes containing numerous cross-ribs. Tubes 45-
828 350 μm in cross-sectional diameter (significantly large variance) and up to 550 μm long
829 (incomplete specimen); tube walls translucent, medium-grained, ca. 1-2 μm thick. Ribs
830 opaque, 1-2 μm wide; distance between ribs ranges from 6-10 to 20 μm .

831 *Material examined:* Two moderately well preserved specimens.

832 *Remarks:* This form differs from *R. tenuis* in its larger tube and thinner wall. Therefore, we
833 have chosen to identify this form as *Rugosoopsis* sp.

834

835 *7.4. Filamentous microfossils*836 Genus *Cephalonyx* A. Weiss, in Veis, 1984 emend. Butterfield, in Butterfield et al., 1994837 Type species: *Cephalonyx coriaceus* (Asseeva) (in Asseeva and Velikanov, 1983)

838 *Cephalonyx* sp.

839 Figures 7.4 and 7.8

840 *Oscillatoriopsis* spp.: Veis et al., 2000, pl. 2, Fig. 8.

841 *Description:* Unbranched tubes with prominent doubled annulations separated by thin-walled
842 intervals. Pseudocellular opaque granulated annulations 25-50 μm wide and 5-10 μm long
843 tapering toward apices to 9-14 μm and separated by translucent intervening areas 2.5-4.5 μm
844 long. Length of tube is about 100 μm (incomplete specimen preserved).

845 *Remarks:* Here we follow the emended diagnosis of genus *Cephalonyx* suggested by
846 Butterfield in Butterfield et al., 1994, who interpreted these fossils as pseudocellular fossil
847 sheaths. It may be that some specimens interpreted as sheaths are in fact compressed
848 ensheathed trichomes in which cross walls have been lost (Golubic and Barghoorn, 1977;
849 Gerasimenko and Krylov, 1983; Hofmann and Jackson, 1994; Sergeev et al., 1995);
850 however, the Kaltasy population exhibits features best interpreted in terms of pseudocellular
851 sheaths, especially the ripped ends of preserved filaments, where irregular edges cut across
852 cell-like features (Fig. 7.8). This is expected if the fossils are sheaths, unexpected if they were
853 actually trichomes. [See also *Cephalonyx* as, described by Veis (1984), which tapers toward
854 apices and has large discoidal and S-like cell shapes probably preserved as casts with
855 cyanobacterial sheaths.] Tapering toward apices may be original, but can also reflect *post-*
856 *mortem* shrinkage of filaments (Golubic and Barghoorn, 1977; Gerasimenko and Krylov,
857 1983; Sergeev, 1992; Knoll and Golubic, 1992). In its morphometric characteristics
858 *Cephalonyx* sp. resembles *Cephalonyx sibiricus* A.Weiss (in Veis, 1984), but in general is
859 smaller.

860 *Material examined:* Two moderately well-preserved specimens.

861

862 Genus *Polytrichoides* Hermann, 1974, emend. Hermann, in Timofeev et al., 1976

863 *Type species:* *Polytrichoides lineatus* Hermann, 1974

864 *Polytrichoides* aff. *P. lineatus* Hermann, 1974, emend. Hermann in Timofeev et al., 1976

865 Figure 7.1

866 *Polytrichoides lineatus* Hermann, 1974, p. 8, pl. 6, Figs. 3 and 4; Timofeev et al., 1976, p. 37, pl. 14, Fig. 7;

867 Yankauskas, 1989, p.119-120, pl. 30, Figs. 5a, 5b, 6, and 7; Hermann, 1990, pl. 9, Figs. 8 and 8a; Schopf,

868 1992, pl. 27, Figs. A₁ and A₂; Gnilovskaya et al., 2000, pl. 2, Figs. 16 and 17; Veis and Petrov, 1994a, pl. 2,

869 Figs. 25 and 27; Vorob'eva et al., 2006, Fig. 2e; Vorob'eva et al., 2009, p.188, Figs.15.13 and 15.14; Sergeev et

870 al., 2012, p. 342, pl. 29, Figs. 6-8; Tang et al., 2013, p. 178, Fig. 14; Vorob'eva et al., 2015, p. 218, Figs. 9.5 and 9.7-

871 9.11.

872 *Majaphyton antiquum* Timofeev and Hermann, 1979 (partim): Veis et al., 2000, pl. 3, Fig. 14.

873 Non *Polytrichoides lineatus*: Veis et al., 2000, pl. 2, Figs. 14 and 15 (For additional synonymy see Sergeev et

874 al., 2012 and Tang et al., 2013).

875 *Description*: Bundles of tubular structures closely grouped within a common cylindrical

876 sheath that tapers toward ends. Tubular structures 1.5-4.5 μm in diameter, walls translucent,

877 hyaline, 0.5-1.0 μm thick. The surrounding sheath is cylindrical, commonly tapering toward both

878 closed and open ends, 25-45 μm wide and up to 350 μm long. Sheath walls translucent,

879 hyaline or fine grained, 1-2 μm thick.

880 *Material examined*: A few poorly preserved specimens.

881 *Occurrence*: Widely distributed in Proterozoic microfossil assemblages.

882 *Remarks*: Like the broadly similar taxa *Eoschizothrix* Lee Seong-Joo and Golubic, 1998 and

883 *Eomicrocoleus* Horodyski and Donaldson 1980, filaments of *Polytrichoides* are commonly

884 compared with the modern polytrichomous hormogonion cyanobacteria *Microcoleus*,

885 *Hydrocoleum* or *Schizothrix* (See Sergeev et al., 2012).

886

887 Genus *Pseudodendron* Butterfield, in Butterfield et al., 1994

888 *Type species*: *Pseudodendron anteridium* Butterfield (in Butterfield et al., 1994).

889 *Pseudodendron anteridium* Butterfield, in Butterfield et al., 1994

890 Figures 8.1 – 8.3

891 *Pseudodendron anteridium* Butterfield, in Butterfield et al., 1994, p. 70, 72, Figs. 28A-28G, and 28J; Butterfield,
892 2009, Figs. 3A and 3B; Vorob'eva et al., 2015, p. 218, 219, Figs. 9.1-9.4.

893 A broad filamentous sheath: Veis and Vorob'eva, 1992, pl. 1, Figs. 12, 15, and 20; Veis and Petrov, 1994a, pl. 3,
894 Fig. 5; Veis et al., 2001, Fig. 2o.

895 A branching filament: Veis and Petrov, 1994a, pl. 3, Fig. 22.

896 *Archaeoclada* sp.: Veis et al., 2000, pl. 3, Figs. 16 and 17.

897 *Pseudodendron* aff. *P. anteridium*: Sperling et al., 2014, Fig. 4.11

898 *Description*: Heterogeneous branching thalli sometime tapering toward apices with an outer
899 sheath and terminal expansion. Branching is lateral or dichotomous, and two levels of
900 branching are clearly present. Thalli are translucent to opaque, with spumose texture. Sheath
901 translucent but not always visible; conspicuous at branch junctions where the sheath can occur
902 on the inside angle as a prominent subtriangular gusset. Thalli 25-125 μm in cross-sectional
903 diameter, up to 1000 μm long (incomplete specimen); sheath wall medium-grained, ca. 1-2
904 μm thick.

905 *Material examined*: Approximately fifty well-preserved specimens.

906 *Occurrence*: Widely distributed in Proterozoic microfossil assemblages.

907 *Remarks*: This form is compared with either branching filaments of cyanobacteria
908 (Butterfield et al., 1994) or eukaryotic algae.

909

910 Genus *Siphonophycus* Schopf, 1968, emend. Knoll and Golubic, 1979, emend. Knoll et al.,
911 1991

912 *Type species*: *Siphonophycus kestron* Schopf, 1968.

913 *Siphonophycus punctatum* Maithy, 1975, emend. Buick and Knoll, 1999

914 Figure 8.7

915 *Siphonophycus punctatus* Maithy, 1975, p. 137, pl. 1, Fig. 5.

916 *Siphonophycus punctatum* Buick and Knoll, 1999, p. 761, Figs. 6.2-6.4 and 6.6.

917 *Asperatofilum experatus* Hermann, in Yankauskas, 1989, p. 100, pl. 26, Fig. 16; Veis and Petrov, 1994a, pl.
918 1, Figs. 25 and 26, pl. 2, Fig. 26, pl. 3, Fig. 17; Veis et al., 2000, pl. 2, Figs. 5, 7, 17 and 21 (for additional
919 synonymy see Buick and Knoll, 1999).

920 *Description:* Unbranched solitary nonseptate tubes, cylindrical to slightly compressed and
921 32.0 to 64.0 μm broad, that rarely contain degraded trichomic thread-like amorphous
922 fragments; tube walls range from smooth to fine-or medium-grained, 0.5 to 1.0 thick.

923 *Occurrence:* Widely distributed in Proterozoic microfossil assemblages.

924 *Material examined:* About a hundred well-preserved specimens.

925

926 Genus *Tortunema* Hermann, in Timofeev et al., 1976, emend. Butterfield, in Butterfield et
927 al., 1994

928 *Type species:* *Tortunema Wernadskii* (Schepeleva, 1960)

929 *Tortunema patomica* (Kolosov, 1982), emend. and comb. Butterfield (in Butterfield et al.,
930 1994)

931 Figures 7.3 and 7.5

932 *Palaeolynghya patomica* Kolosov, 1982, p. 72, pl. 10, Fig. 1.

933 *Botuobia patomica* Kolosov, 1984, p. 48-49, pl. 9, Fig. 2; Yankauskas, 1989, p. 101, pl. 43, fig. 3.

934 *Botuobia angustata* Kolosov, 1984, p. 49-50, pl. 10, Fig. 1.

935 *Botuobia diversa* Kolosov, 1984, p. 50, pl. 11, Fig. 1.

936 *Palaeolynghya sphaerocephala* Hermann and Pylina in Hermann, 1986 (partim): Veis et al., 2000, pl. 2, Fig.
937 6.

938 *Description:* Unbranched solitary cylindrical compressed tubes 45 to 50 μm broad (20 μm
939 in narrowest part) and tapering toward both ends; contains degraded opaque thread-like
940 fragments 10-15 μm wide. Tubes transparent or translucent, prominent, non-lamellated,
941 about 0.5 μm thick and up to 400 μm long with clear annular lines 1-2 μm long separated
942 by intervening regions 5-7 μm long.

943 *Material examined:* One well-preserved and a few medium to poorly preserved specimens.

944 *Age and distribution:* Mesoproterozoic: Kaltasy Formation, 203 Bedryazh and 133 Azino-
945 Pal'nikov boreholes; Ediacaran, Kursov Formation, Siberia.

946 *Remarks:* *Tortunema* was originally erected to describe septate (pseudoseptate) sheaths that
947 taper toward both ends. We follow here the formal classification of Butterfield in
948 Butterfield et al., 1994, accepting *Botuobia* as a junior synonym of *Tortunema* and
949 separating the latter into species on the basis of tube diameter, much like the convention for
950 *Siphonophycus* sheaths (Butterfield et al., 1994, p. 69). Although generally interpreted as
951 pseudoseptate sheaths, *Tortunema* might alternatively be considered trichomes which lost
952 septa during diagenesis. This interpretation is unlikely for the Kaltasy population, both
953 because ripped ends cut across "septa" (Fig. 7.3; see discussion of *Cephalonyx*) and
954 because some specimens contain remnants of shrunken cells (Fig. 7.5), obviating
955 interpretation of the entire specimen as a trichome.

956

957 7.5. *Miscellaneous microfossils*

958 Genus *Pellicularia* Yankauskas, 1980

959 Type species: *Pellicularia tenera* Yankauskas, 1980

960 *Pellicularia tenera* Yankauskas, 1980

961 Figures 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10

962 *Pellicularia tenera* Yankauskas, 1980, p. 110, pl. 12, Fig. 9; Yankauskas, 1989, p. 139, pl. 42, Figs. 3-5; Veis
963 et al., 2000, pl. 3, Fig. 6.

964 *Description:* Fusiform-like and ribbon-like structures 25-70 μm across and up to 350 μm
965 long, with longitudinal intertwined thread-like filaments 1-2 μm in diameter incorporated
966 inside the main body. Walls translucent, about 1 μm thick, with folds 1-2 μm wide; surface
967 granular to shagrinata.

968 *Remarks:* Yankauskas (1980) described this taxon from the Neoproterozoic (Upper
969 Riphean) Shtanda Formation of Cis-Urals area, but his treatment has not been broadly

970 recognized. Veis et al. (2000) described it from the Kaltasy Formation, using this to argue
971 for a Neoproterozoic age. The affinities of the microfossils are uncertain.

972 *Material examined:* Four well-preserved specimens.

973 *Age and distribution:* Mesoproterozoic: Kaltasy Formation, 203 Bedryazh and 133 Azino-
974 Pal'nikov boreholes; Neoproterozoic: Shtanda Formation, 62 Kabakovo borehole, Cis-
975 Urals area, East European Platform.

976

977 Unnamed Form 1

978 Figures 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3

979 *Description:* Translucent irregular ellipsoidal or elongated vesicles arranged in clusters
980 from a few individuals joined each other by their walls. Vesicles 100-265 μm across and
981 240-390 μm long; surface reticulated, with a granulated wall 1.0-1.5 μm thick.

982 *Material examined:* Five well-preserved specimens.

983 *Remarks:* Unnamed Form 1 exhibits a reticulated surface that could reflect *post-mortem*
984 alteration. Clusters of vesicles could also formed by secondary aggregation of the dead cells.
985 Originally, therefore, these microorganisms could have been smooth-walled vesicles similar to
986 *Leiosphaeridia*. Given the large uncertainties in basic interpretation, we prefer to describe it
987 informally, noting only that it contributes to the overall diversity recorded by the Kaltasy
988 assemblage.

989

990 Unnamed Form 2

991 Figures 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6

992 Envelopes with problematic spines or pseudospines: Sperling et al., 2014, Fig. 4.5.

993 *Description:* Solitary, translucent to opaque vesicles of spherical and subspherical shape
994 150-785 μm across, but irregular in outlines. Vesicles bear blunt conical and elongated
995 spine-like structures 40-130 μm wide (near base) and 15-65 μm long. Walls translucent,

996 medium-grained, 1.0-2.0 μm thick and sometime are surrounded by outer translucent
997 membrane about 0.5 μm thick.

998 *Material examined:* Five relatively poorly preserved specimens.

999 *Remarks:* The origin of spine-like structures that cover the vesicle surface is uncertain;
1000 given their irregular shape, we suspect that these originated during diagenesis.

1001

1002 Unnamed Form 3

1003 Figures 9.7 and 9.10

1004 *Description:* Solitary, single-layered translucent spheroidal or ellipsoidal vesicles with
1005 rounded ends. Vesicle surface is covered with small spine-like structures sometimes
1006 surrounded by a halo- or membrane-like transparent structure. Vesicle diameter 35-100
1007 μm ; walls translucent, medium-grained, less than 1 μm thick; spine-like structures 1.5-5
1008 μm wide and 2-4 μm long.

1009 *Material examined:* Twenty three variously preserved specimens.

1010 *Remarks:* The genesis of spine-like structures covering surfaces of Unnamed Form 3 is
1011 uncertain. They are probably of secondary origin, similar to many pseudospines
1012 observed on originally smooth surfaces of cyanobacteria (e.g., Sergeev et al., 1995,
1013 Fig. 7.10; 2012, pl. 7, Figs. 8-10, pl. 27, Fig. 5; Sergeev, 2006, pl. 1, Fig. 10, pl. 21,
1014 Figs. 10-13, pl. 23, Figs. 1-8). However, as in all previous cases (Unnamed Forms 1 and
1015 2) we cannot rule out an option that these structures are of primary origin and so describe
1016 them here only informally.

1017

1018 Unnamed Form 4

1019 Figures 9.8, 9.9, 9.11 and 9.12

1020 Paired envelopes of *Leiosphaeridia jacutica*: Sperling et al., 2014, Fig. 4.9

1021 *Description:* Elongated translucent to opaque vesicles, solitary, in pairs, or arranged in an
1022 *echelon* style 2 or 3 together. Vesicles translucent to opaque 100-350 μm wide and 180-
1023 500 μm long, with wall up to 2 μm thick (when visible), with a shagrinated surface and
1024 typically a system of perpendicular cracks or transverse annulations 1-3 μm wide in the
1025 equatorial regions.

1026 *Remarks:* These microfossils resemble microfossils recently described from Neoproterozoic
1027 deposits of China as *Pololeptus rugosus* (Tang et al., 2013). Similarities, however, could
1028 reflect diagenetic convergence.

1029 *Material examined:* Twenty well-preserved specimens.

1030

1031 Unnamed Form 5

1032 Figures 9.13 and 9.14

1033 *Description:* Elongated translucent solitary vesicles composed of two or three segments
1034 that communicate freely each to other, but with constrictions at junctions. Some
1035 vesicles exhibit elongated, blunt, horn-like protrusions. Vesicle surface fine-grained and
1036 covered with small dark irregular grains. Vesicle width 100-700 μm , length 135-815 μm ;
1037 protrusions 10-15 μm wide and 15-20 μm long; walls 0.5-1.0 μm thick.

1038 *Material examined:* Eight variously preserved specimens.

1039 *Remarks:* The morphology of the microfossils is quite unusual for Proterozoic
1040 microfossils. Upon recovery of better preserved samples, this population could deserve
1041 recognition as a new genus, but given the quality of our specimens and lingering
1042 uncertainty about diagenetic alteration, we describe it here only informally.

1043

1044 **Acknowledgements.**

1045 We thank the late V.I. Kozlov, who facilitated this research and Heda Agić and an
1046 anonymous reviewer for comments that materially improved our paper. We also thank the
1047 NASA Astrobiology Institute (AHK) and RFBR Grants 13-05-00127, 14-05-00323 and the
1048 Program of the Presidium of Russian Academy of Sciences 30 (VNS and NGV) for
1049 research support.

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1458 **Figure captions**

1459

1460 Fig. 1. A – Index map of North Eurasia, indicating the location of the studied area (filled
1461 square at arrow). B – Map of the southern Ural Mountains and Volgo-Ural region showing
1462 the locations of the microfossiliferous boreholes of the Kaltasy Formation (filled pentagons;
1463 see section 3.1 for details), abbreviations: 203B – 203 Bedryazh, 133AP – 133 Azino-
1464 Pal’nikovo, and 1EA – 1 East Askino boreholes.

1465

1466 Fig. 2. Generalized Proterozoic stratigraphy of the Bashkirian meganticlinorium (southern
1467 Ural Mountains) and Volga–Ural region (upper Neoproterozoic part of the successions not
1468 shown) with 1 East Askino (1EA), 203 Bedryazh (203B) and 133 Azino-Pal’nikovo
1469 (133AP) boreholes (modified after Keller and Chumakov, 1983; Sergeev, 2006; Kah et al.,
1470 2007; Kozlov et al., 2011). Abbreviations, formations and members: Ai-Bin – Ai-Bolshoi
1471 Inzer, St-Sr – Satka-Suran, Bk-Js – Bakal-Yusha, Ms – Mashak, Zg – Zigal’ga, Zk –
1472 Zigazy-Komarovo, Av – Avzyan, Zl – Zilmerdak, Kt – Katav, In – Inzer, Sg – Sigaevo, Ks
1473 – Kostino, Nr – Norkino, Rt – Rotkovo, Mn – Minaevo, Kl – Kaltasy, Kl₁ – Sauzovo, Kl₂ –
1474 Arlan, Kl₃ – Ashit, Kb – Kabakovo, Nd – Nadezhdino, Tk – Tukaevo, Ol – Ol’khovka, Us
1475 – Usa, Ln – Leonidovo, Pr – Priyutovo; Sh – Shikhan, Lz – Leuznovo; groups and
1476 subgroups: Sr – Sarapul, Pk – Prikamskii, Br – Borodulino; other geological units: PP –
1477 Paleoproterozoic, LP – Lower Proterozoic, Pz – Paleozoic, R₂ – Middle Riphean, Ed –
1478 Ediacaran, V – Vendian. Key, 1 – tillites, 2 – conglomerates, 3 – sandstones, 4 – siltstones, 5
1479 – shales, 6 – limestone, 7 – clay limestone, 8 – dolomite, 9 – dolomites with cherts, 10 –
1480 marls, 11 – stromatolites, 12 – *Conophyton* stromatolites, 13 – tuff, tuffaceous sandstone, and
1481 diabase; 14 – basement gneiss, 15 – disconformities, 16 – angular unconformities. New Re-
1482 Os age estimates from 203 Bedryazh core (Sperling et al., 2014) indicated by arrow (see
1483 section 2.3 for details). The numbers of the collected samples are shown to the right of the

1484 1EA and 203B cores (indicated by dots); fossiliferous levels of the samples collected by
1485 Veis et al., 2000 are indicated to the left of 133AP core (arrows). The fossiliferous Arlan
1486 (Kl₂) and Ashit (Kl₃) members of the Kaltasy Formation are shown with different shades
1487 of grey.

1488

1489 Fig. 3. Microfossil taxa reported from the Kaltasy Formation, indicating their morphological
1490 grouping, relative abundance (R = rare, C = common, D = dominant), and size range
1491 (displayed on a logarithmic scale in which the arrows denote taxa larger than 550 µm in
1492 diameter).

1493

1494 Fig. 4. Sphaeromorph acritarchs. 1, 6, 7, *Leiosphaeridia jacutica*; 1, (1EA)-11-3, p. 6,
1495 P55[3], 14712-117; 6, (1EA)-15-1, p. 2, M52[3], 14712-191; 7, (1EA)-11-4, p. 5, R50[0],
1496 14712-124; 2, *Leiosphaeridia tenuissima* (large light disc) and *L. crassa* (smaller darker
1497 disk), (1EA)-12-3, p. 2, N59[2], 14712-154a and 14712-154b, respectively; 3, 4,
1498 *Leiosphaeridia ternata*; 3, (1EA)-16-1, p. 2, M54[0], 14712-196; 4, (203B)-40-1, p. 4,
1499 N70[2], 14712-70; 5, *Leiosphaeridia atava*, (203B)-40-3, p. 7, K66[0], 14712-92; 8 – 10,
1500 *Leiosphaeridia* sp.; 8, (1EA)-16-6, p. 2, M49[4], 14712-228; 9, (1EA)-12-2, p. 2, M46[2],
1501 14712-147; 10, (1EA)-11-3, p. 3, M62[1], 14712-114; 11 – 13, *Leiosphaeridia* (?)
1502 *wimani*; 11, (203B)-34-20, p. 1, R27[3], 14712-297; 12, (203B)-34-19, p. 2, M61[2],
1503 14712-296; 13, (203B)-34-19, p. 1, L62[4], 14712-298.

1504 For all illustrated specimens, the single scale bar = 10 µm and the double bar = 100 µm.

1505 All specimens are from the Arlan and Ashit members of the Kaltasy Formation; sample

1506 location and explanation are provided in sections 3.1 and 7.1, respectively.

1507

1508 Fig. 5. Sphaeromorph and netromorph acritarchs. 1, *Spumosina rubiginosa*, (133AP)-2560-
1509 2568, p. 1, K38[2], 14712-287; 2, 3, *Synsphaeridium* sp.; 2, (203B)-31-1, p. 2, Q59[3],
1510 14712-8; 3, (1EA)-18-1, p. 4, N59[4], 14712-243; 4-7, *Pterospermopsimorpha pileiformis*;
1511 4, (1EA)-11-1, p. 3, N53[4], 14712-104; 5, (1EA)-11-4, p. 1, K51[2], 14712-120; 6, (1EA)-
1512 14-1, p. 1, L48[0], 14712-186; 7, (1EA)-12-4, p. 4, Q58[4], 14712-165; 8, 9, *Spiromorpha*
1513 aff. *S. segmentata*, (203B)-34-6, p. 1, M64[3], 14712-32; 9, detail of 8, arrows indicate
1514 crescent-like connecting wields; 10-12, (?)*Moyeria* sp.; 10, 11, (203B)-34-6, p. 3, S59[2],
1515 14712-34, 11, detail of 10, arrows indicate overlapping of bispiral bands each to other; 12,
1516 (1EA)-12-4, p. 3, O57[2], 14712-164, arrows indicate possible initial cleavage of vesicle;
1517 13-15, *Navifusa* sp.; 13, (1EA)-16-8, p. 3, M58[4], 14712-235; 14, (1EA)-11-2, p. 4,
1518 N58[4], 14712-110; 15, (1EA)-12-1, p. 3, O53[1], 14712-136.

1519

1520 Fig. 6. Large filamentous forms. 1-6, *Rectia magna*; 1, (133AP)-2064-2068-1, p. 2,
1521 H40[3], 14712-6802; 2, (133AP)-2052-2054-1, p. 3, J36[1], 14712-5084; 3, holotype,
1522 (133AP)-2052-2054-1, p. 8, Q33[2], 14712-5408; 4, (133AP)-2056-2058-1, p. 4, Q47[2],
1523 14712-269; 5, (133AP)-2058-2060-1, p. 2, K38[2], 14712-6002; 6, (133AP)-2052-2054-1,
1524 p. 9, Y40[4], 14712-265; 7-9, *Eosolena minuta*; 7, (1EA)-11-5, p. 1, L46[0], 14712-125, 8,
1525 9, details of 9; 10, *Plicatidium latum*, (133AP)-2044-2046-1, p. 6, O41[1], 14712-4618;
1526 11, 12, *Rugosoopsis* sp.; 11, (133AP)-2073-2077-1, p. 3, K44[4], 14712-279; 12, (203B)-
1527 34-7, p. 1, L67[2], 14712-35.

1528

1529 Fig. 7. Filamentous microfossils. 1, *Polytrichoides* aff. *P. lineatus*, (133AP)-2060-2064-1,
1530 p. 1, D36[3], 14712-6401; 2, 6, 7, *Oscillatoriopsis longa*; 2, (133AP)-2044-2046-1, p. 2,
1531 D45[3], 14712-258; 6, (1EA)-11-5, p. 3, J45[4], 14712-131; 7, (203B)-39-3, p. 2, L68[1],
1532 14712-60; 3, 5, *Tortunema patomica*; 3, (1EA)-11-3, p. 4, N59[3], 14712-115; 5, (133AP)-

1533 2058-2060-1, p. 12, K39[2], 14712-271; 4, 8, *Cephalonyx* sp.; 4, (133AP)-2568-2572-1, p.
1534 6, N40[2], 14712-6003; 8, (133AP)-2073-2077-1, p. 1, G36[3], 14712-278, arrow indicates
1535 a probable mechanically displaced trichome fragment.

1536

1537 Fig. 8. Filamentous and miscellaneous microfossils. 1-3, *Pseudodendron anteridium*;
1538 1,(133AP)-2817-2822-1, p. 2, V20[1], 14712-2801; 2, (133AP)-2760-2765-1, p. 4, H36[3],
1539 14712-2764; 3, (203B)-40-3, p. 1, E57[3], 14712-86; 4, *Siphonophycus robustum* (thin
1540 threads) and poorly preserved filaments of *Polytrichoides* aff. *P. lineatus* or *Pellicularia*
1541 *tenera* (larger threads), (203B)-34-3, p. 4, Q59[1], 14712-24; 5, *Siphonophycus typicum*,
1542 (1EA)-12-7, p. 1, M53[3], 14712-184; 6, *Siphonophycus solidum*, (1EA)-11-3, p. 2, L57[3],
1543 14712-113; 7, *Siphonophycus punctatum*, (133AP)-2046-2048-1, p. 1, F35[4], 14712-4803;
1544 8-10, *Pellicularia tenera*; 8, (133AP)-2353-2355-1, p. 1, W44[2], 14712-551; 9, (203B)-
1545 34-9, p. 2, K66[4], 14712-43; 10, (203B)-34-8, p. 3, P68[4], 14712-41.

1546

1547 Fig. 9. Miscellaneous microfossils. 1-3, Unnamed form 1; 1, (1EA)-12-6, p. 2, N46[3],
1548 14712-182; 2, (1EA)-12-2, p. 5, K57[3], 14712-150; 3, (1EA)-12-3, p. 1, F60[4], 14712-
1549 153; 4 - 6, Unnamed form 2; 4, (203B)-31-1, p. 3, S60[1], 14712-9; 5, (203B)-39-3, p. 3,
1550 M69[4], 14712-61; 6, (203B)-34-3, p. 3, K60[4], 14712-23; 7, 10, Unnamed form 3; 7,
1551 (203B)-40-2, p. 7, R53[4], 14712-83; 10, (203B)-40-2, p. 8, S58[3], 14712-85; 8, 9, 11, 12,
1552 Unnamed form 4; 8, (1EA)-16-7, p. 2, N22[3], 14712-232; 9, (1EA)-16-2, p. 3, P55[4],
1553 14712-205; 11, (203B)-34-3, p. 2, K62[0], 14712-22; 12, (1EA)-11-5, p. 1a, K47[3],
1554 14712-126; 13, 14, Unnamed form 5; 13, (1EA)-12-3, p. 5, N53[4], 14712-158; 14, (1EA)-
1555 18-1, p. 6, O54[0], 14712-245.

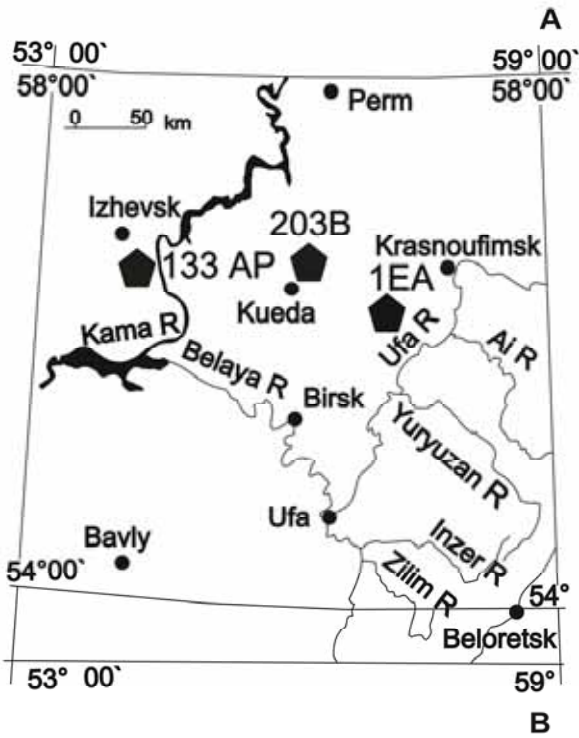
1556

1557 Fig. 10. Three morphological groups (genera) of filamentous microfossils: A – *Rectia* tubes
1558 with a rounded closed end bearing double annulations, B – *Cephalonyx* tubes bearing
1559 numerous annulations, C – elastic tubes of *Tortunema* with numerous cross-ribs tapering
1560 toward both ends and poorly preserved trichome remains. The double scale bar is 100 μm
1561 and single bar is 10 μm .

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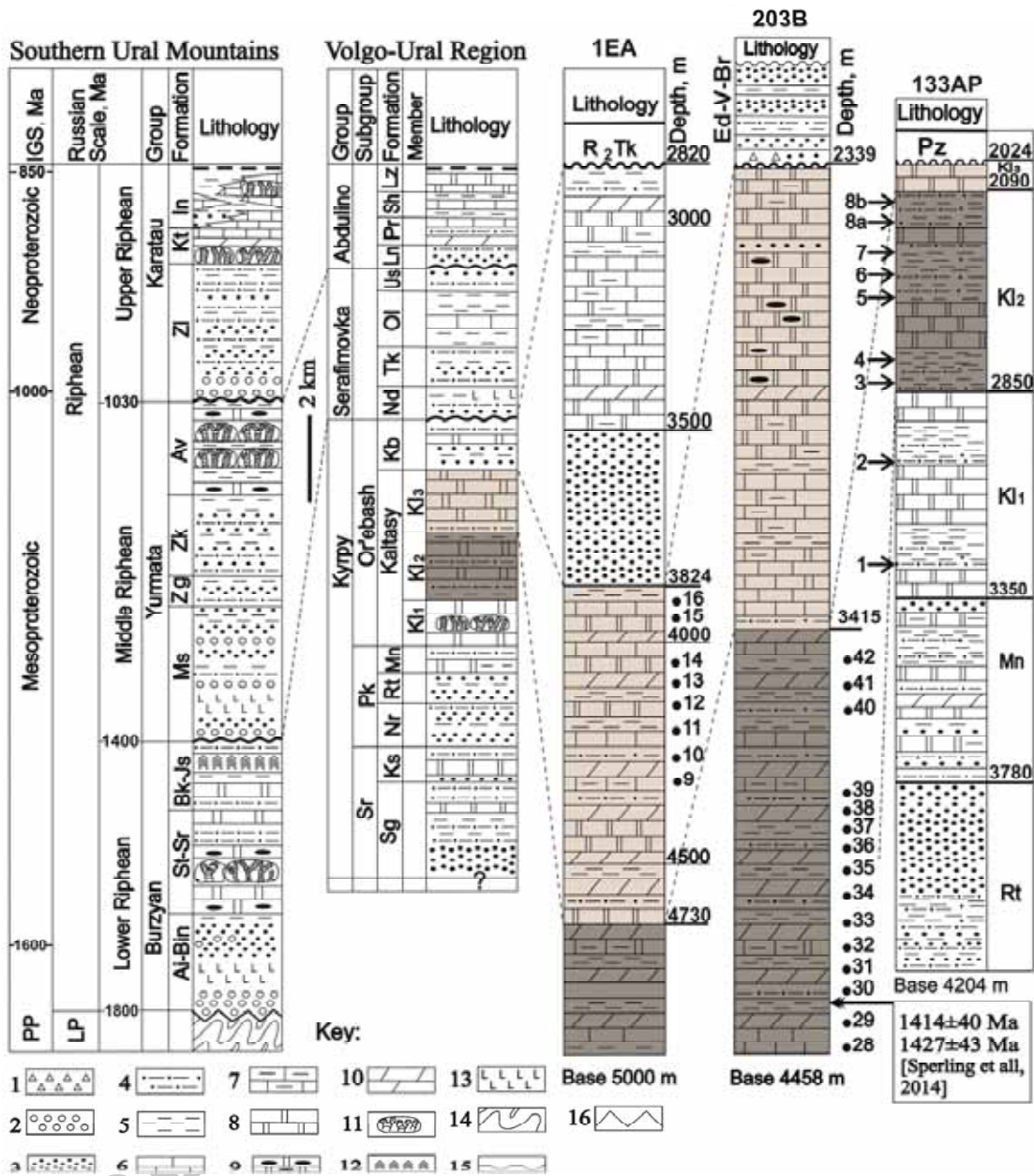
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1568 Fig. 1

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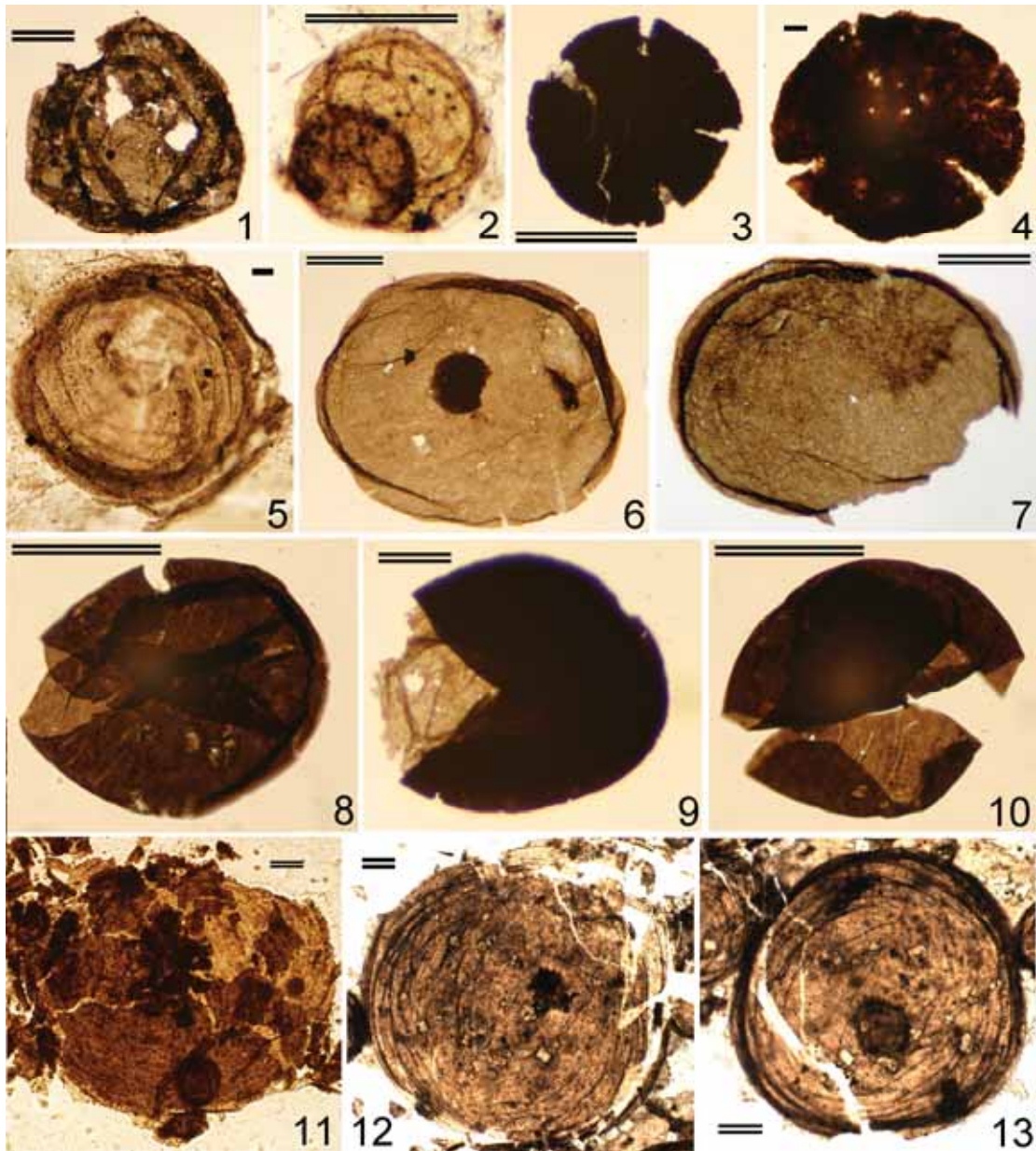
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1573 Fig. 2

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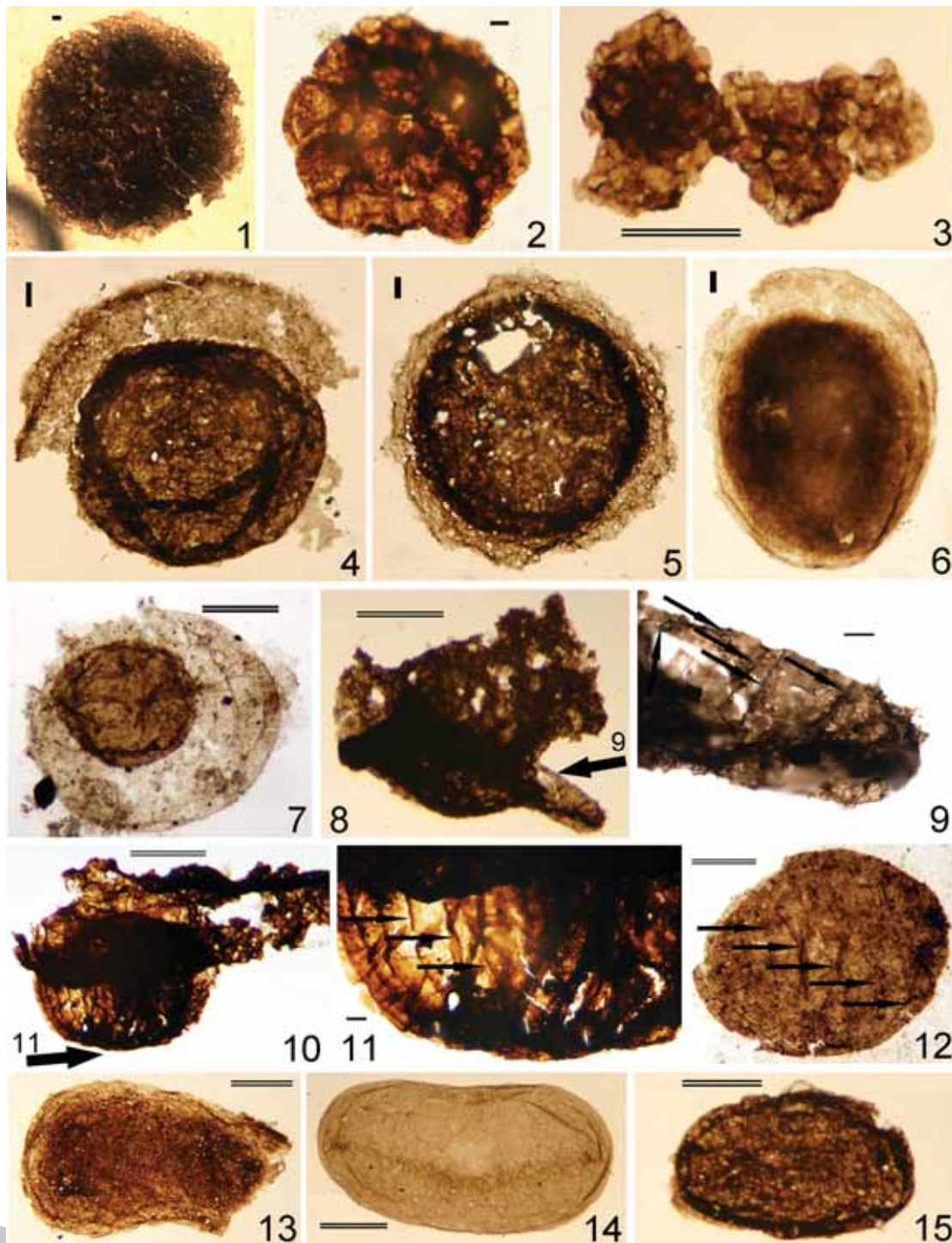
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1584 Fig. 4

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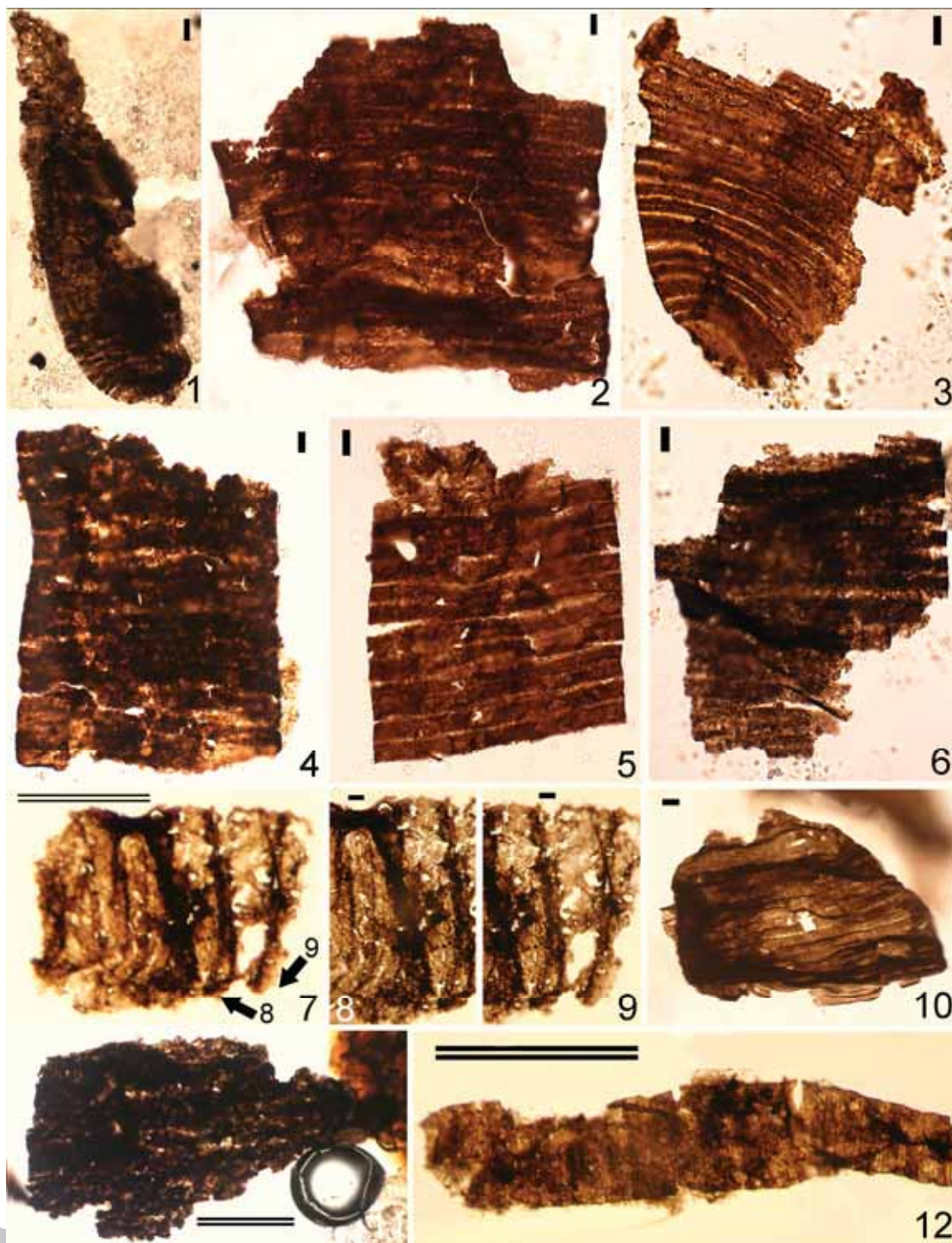


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1590 Fig. 5

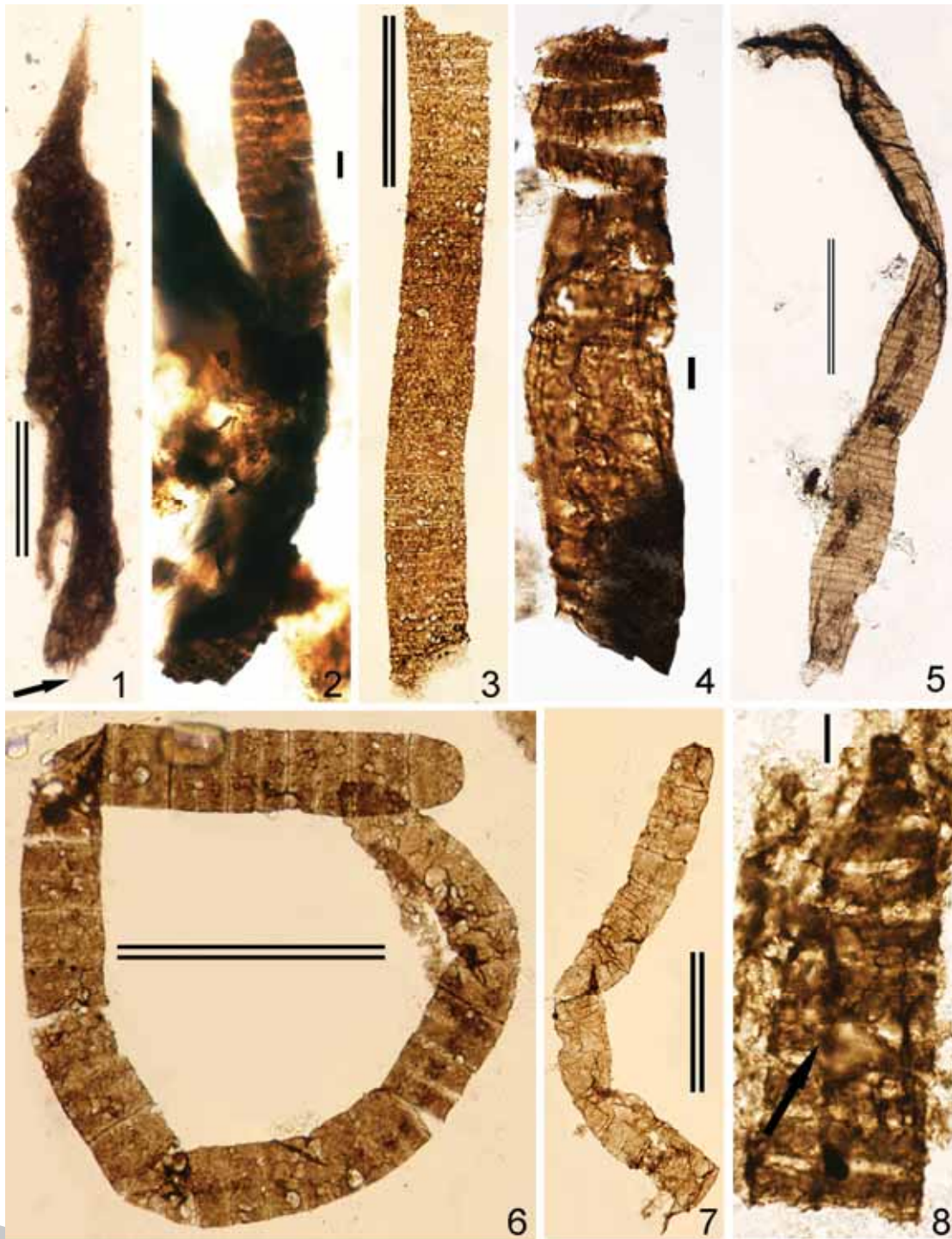


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1594 Fig. 6

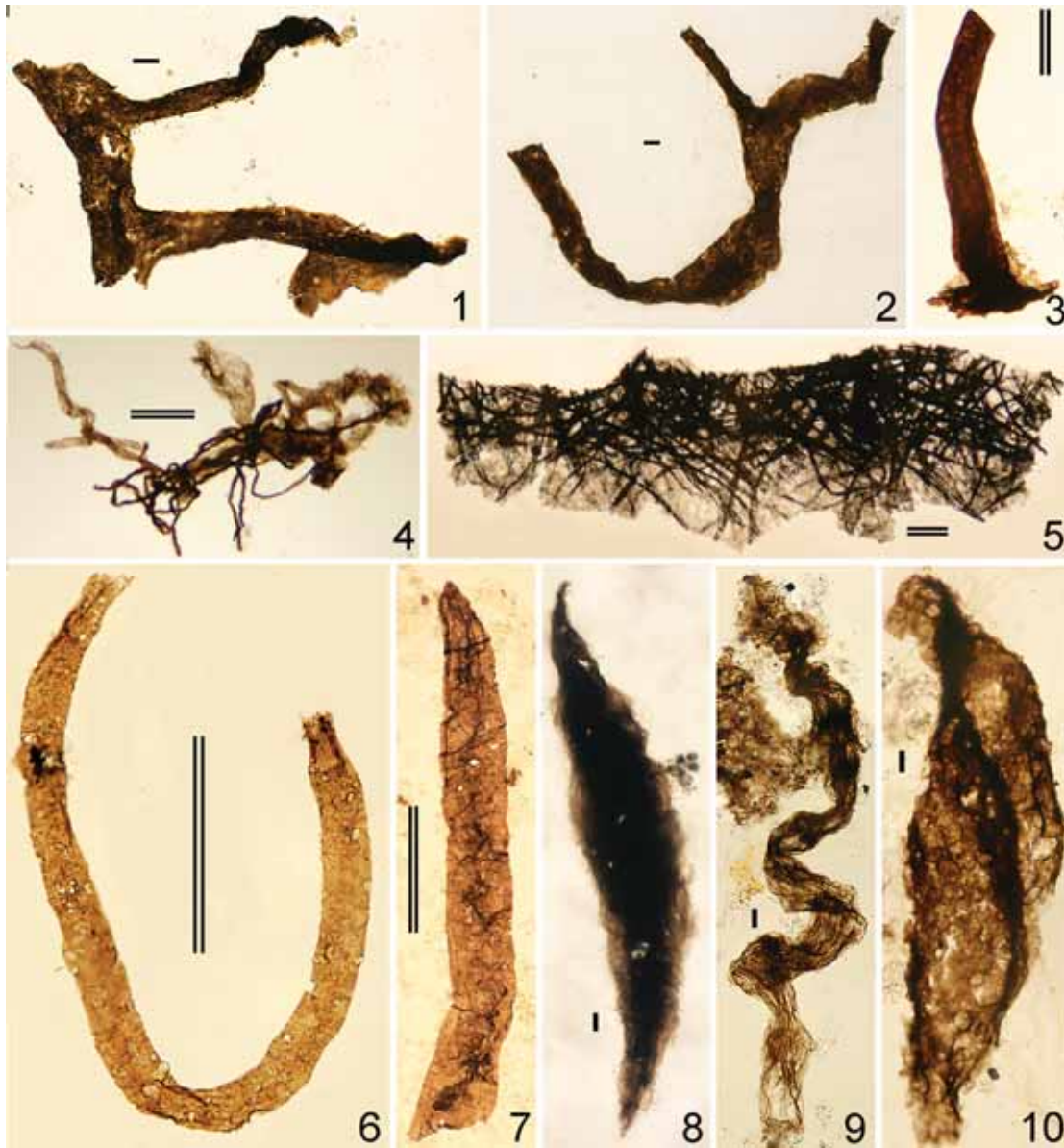


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1597 Fig. 7

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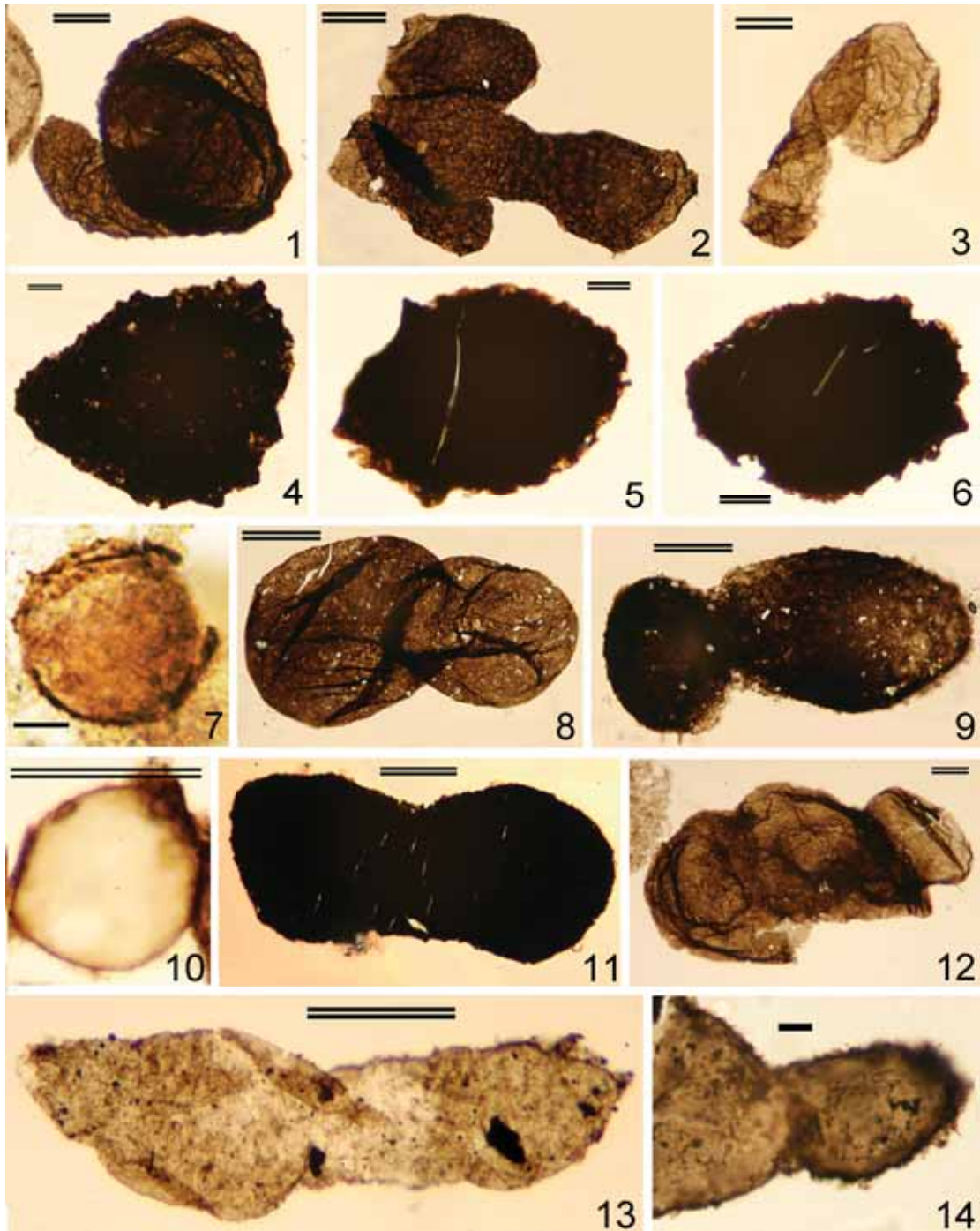
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1602 Fig. 8

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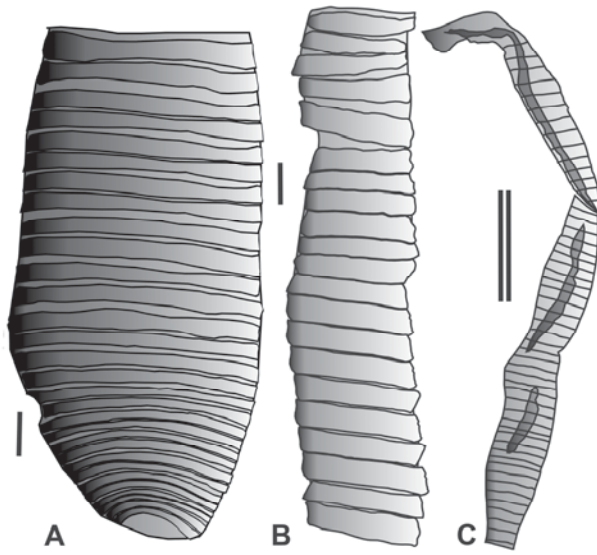
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1607 Fig. 9

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1613 Fig. 10

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1618 Graphical abstract

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1623

1624 • The ~1450-Ma-old Kaltasy Formation contains compressed organic-walled microfossils.

1625

1626 • The fossils record life in basinal but oxic environments.

1627

1628 • The assemblage includes large and moderately complex eukaryotic microorganisms.

1629

1630 • The microbiota differs from many coeval deposits in its absence of acanthomorphs.

1631

1632 • The fossils document morphological conservatism among early eukaryotes.

1633

1634