

1 **Full paper**

2 **A Physcomitrella PIN protein acts in spermatogenesis and sporophyte abortion**

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16 **Key words:** auxin, bryophyte, flagellum, moss, plant development, sperm, spermatozoid

17 **Summary**

18 • The auxin efflux PIN-FORMED (PIN) proteins are conserved in all land plants and important
19 players in plant development. In the moss *Physcomitrella* (*Physcomitrium patens*) three
20 canonical PINs (PpPINA-C) are expressed in the gametophore. PpPINA and PpPINB show
21 functional activity in vegetative growth and sporophyte development. Here, we examined the
22 role of PpPINC in the life cycle of *Physcomitrella*.

23 • We established reporter and knockout lines for PpPINC and analysed vegetative and
24 reproductive tissues using microscopy and transcriptomic sequencing of moss gametangia.

25 • PpPINC is expressed in immature leaves, mature gametangia and during sporophyte
26 development. The sperm cells (spermatozoids) of knockout mutants exhibit increased motility
27 compared to the wild type and show an altered flagella phenotype. Further, the knockout
28 mutants have a significantly increased fertility, and an increased abortion rate of premeiotic
29 sporophytes.

30 • Here, we show that PpPINC is an important regulator for spermatogenesis and sporophyte
31 development. We propose an evolutionary conserved way of polar growth during early moss
32 embryo development and sporophyte attachment, while suggesting the mechanical function in
33 sporophyte securement of a ring structure, the Lorch ring.

34 Introduction

35 The auxin signal transduction pathway is conserved in all land plants (Paponov *et al.*, 2009; Flores-
36 Sandoval *et al.*, 2015; Thelander *et al.*, 2018; Cancé *et al.*, 2022). In the model moss *Physcomitrella*
37 (*Physcomitrium patens*), the main auxin biosynthesis pathway is, as in *Arabidopsis*, the conversion of
38 tryptophan by TAR enzymes to indole-3-pyruvate (IPyA) from where it is converted by YUC enzymes
39 into active auxin (indole-3-acetic acid, IAA) (Landberg *et al.*, 2020). Auxin homeostasis plays an
40 important role during the life cycle of *Physcomitrella*, maintaining growth and organogenesis (Ludwig-
41 Müller *et al.*, 2009; Thelander *et al.*, 2018). However, there is no indication for a polar auxin transport
42 in the moss shoot (Fujita *et al.*, 2008), although the protein family responsible for polar auxin transport,
43 Pin-formed (PIN), is conserved in all land plants, including bryophytes (Bennett *et al.*, 2014a; Zhang *et*
44 *al.*, 2020).

45 Canonical PIN proteins share four highly conserved motifs in the hydrophilic loop and a strong
46 conservation in the N'- and C' terminal transmembrane regions, while noncanonical PINs are defined
47 by a higher variability (Bennett *et al.*, 2014a). Structures and mechanism of auxin transport have recently
48 been elucidated in great detail for the *Arabidopsis thaliana* PIN8 protein (Ung *et al.*, 2022). The
49 *Physcomitrella* genome encodes four PIN genes, the three canonical *PpPINA*, *PpPINB* and *PpPINC*,
50 and the noncanonical *PpPIND*, with *PpPINA* and *PpPINB* being the most similar to each other (Bennett
51 *et al.*, 2014b). The *Physcomitrella* PIN proteins form an outgroup with other bryophytes to vascular
52 plants and lycophytes, where the canonical PpPINs cluster with PIN proteins from other mosses, while
53 the noncanonical PpPIND is separated together with several PIN proteins of the liverwort *Marchantia*
54 *polymorpha* (Bennett *et al.*, 2014a).

55 In the gametophore, apical stem cells show the highest expression of *PpTAR* genes, indicating
56 biosynthesis of IPyA (Landberg *et al.*, 2020), with auxin accumulating beneath the stem apex and at the
57 stem base (Bierfreund *et al.*, 2003; Fujita *et al.*, 2008). The growth of developing leaves (phylloids) in
58 *Physcomitrella* is marked by high auxin activity (Thelander *et al.*, 2019) with all three canonical *PpPIN*
59 genes being active (Viaene *et al.*, 2014). While *PpPINA* is the highest expressed *PIN* gene in
60 *Physcomitrella* tissues, *PpPINC* has the lowest expression level of all canonical PINs (Bennett *et al.*,
61 2014b). Single knockouts of *PpPIN* genes have no severe effect on gametophore growth (Viaene *et al.*,
62 2014), while the double knockout of *PpPINA* and *PpPINB* leads to elongated leaves, a phenotype similar
63 to *Physcomitrella* gametophores treated with excess auxin or auxin transport inhibitors (Decker *et al.*,
64 2006; Bennett *et al.*, 2014b).

65 When introduced to short day conditions with low temperatures, the monoecious moss *Physcomitrella*
66 initiates the formation of sexual organs on the gametophore apex (Hohe *et al.*, 2002) with specialized
67 stem cells for female archegonia and male antheridia development (Kofuji & Hasebe, 2014). Growth of
68 antheridia and archegonia is highly synchronized, beginning with the formation of the antheridia while

69 archegonia develop later but mature faster, so that self-fertilization is possible (Cove, 2005; Landberg
70 *et al.*, 2013). The development and growth of gametangia is controlled by the auxin-biosynthesis
71 regulators *SHORT INTERNODE/STYLISH (SHI/STY)* and *TAR* enzymes, influencing the neck length
72 of archegonia and growth of antheridia. During the growth of antheridia, the expression of *PpSHI* and
73 *PpTAR* genes overlap with the expression of *PpPINA* and the accumulation of auxin in apical cells,
74 before spermatogenesis begins. This activity slowly declines and reaches its lowest point during
75 spermatogenesis, indicating a process where auxin plays a minor role (Landberg *et al.*, 2013; Landberg
76 *et al.*, 2020). Spermatogenesis in *Physcomitrella* is tightly regulated, producing motile, biflagellate
77 sperm cells, relying on the availability of water to swim to the egg cell (Reski, 1998; Cove, 2005; Ortiz-
78 Ramírez *et al.*, 2017; Koshimizu *et al.*, 2018; Gu *et al.*, 2022). Like in antheridia, the activity of auxin
79 biosynthesis, signalling and accumulation are the highest in archegonia during early growth phases. The
80 precursor egg cell and apical neck cells show the highest activity, while there is a minimum of expression
81 during egg maturation (Landberg *et al.*, 2013; Landberg *et al.*, 2020). After fertilization of the egg cell,
82 a diploid embryo grows from the zygote and develops into the moss sporophyte (Horst *et al.*, 2016). The
83 sporophyte in *Physcomitrella* is reduced compared to other mosses (Kirbis *et al.*, 2020), even within its
84 own family (Ostendorf *et al.*, 2021), and consists of the sporophyte foot, a short seta and the spore
85 capsule, which rips open after maturation to release the spores (Cove, 2005). Auxin is distributed
86 dynamically in a polar manner during sporophyte growth, with an auxin maximum in the apex of the
87 early embryo which later localizes to the foot of the young sporophyte where it slowly recedes during
88 maturation (Fujita *et al.*, 2008). The sporophyte foot is secured in a maternal cavity (vaginula) and
89 covered at its base with haustorial cells, important for the uptake of nutrients provided by the
90 gametophore (Regmi *et al.*, 2017). Formation of sporophytes is a complex process and regulated by a
91 number of genetic elements (Mosquna *et al.*, 2009; Horst *et al.*, 2016; Ortiz-Ramírez *et al.*, 2016; Lopez-
92 Obando *et al.*, 2016; Hashida *et al.*, 2020; Kirbis *et al.*, 2020; Sakakibara *et al.*, 2008; Takechi *et al.*,
93 2021, Landberg *et al.* 2022). However, auxin remains a crucial player in sporophyte growth (Fujita *et al.*,
94 2008), with the two *Physcomitrella PIN* genes *PpPINA* and *PpPINB* showing functional activity in
95 the development of sporophytes (Bennett *et al.*, 2014b), whereas the role of the canonical *PpPINC*
96 remains unclear.

97 Here, we elucidate the role of *PpPINC* in the *Physcomitrella* life cycle. We found that *PpPINC*
98 influences spermatogenesis-related gene expression, controls motility and phenotype of moss sperm
99 cells, and is important in preventing early abortion of premeiotic sporophytes, while it has no obvious
100 role in vegetative growth.

101

102 **Material and Methods**

103 **Plant material and culture conditions**

104 The *Physcomitrella patens* (Hedw.) Bruch & Schimp. ecotype Gransden covers several laboratory
105 strains which are descendants of the first original cultivated single clone (Haas *et al.*, 2020) and was
106 recently renamed to *Physcomitrium patens* (Hedw.) Mitt.. We used as wild type (WT) a fertile Gransden
107 line, which underwent sexual reproduction regularly as a basis for all transgenic lines. Plants were
108 cultivated using Knop medium (pH 5.8) according to Reski & Abel (1985) containing microelements
109 according to Egner *et al.* (2002). For solid medium, 12 g/l agar (OXOID, Thermo Scientific) were
110 added. Standard growth conditions were long day 16 hours light with $70\pm 5 \mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-2}$ and 22°C.
111 Sporophyte induction was modified after Hohe *et al.* (2002). Plants were grown in long day conditions,
112 before being transferred to sporophyte inducing conditions (Hohe *et al.*, 2002). At day 18 of sporophyte
113 induction, plants were watered (H₂O dest., 10 ml for 9 cm petri dish), which was removed from the plate
114 at day 25. All moss lines used are stored in the International Moss Stock Center (IMSC;
115 <https://www.moss-stock-center.org>) with the following accession numbers: *PinCPromCit* = 40917,
116 *pinC#10* = 40918, *pinC#29* = 40919, *pinC#69* = 40420, WT = 40095.

117 **Generation of transgenic lines**

118 Transgenic lines were created via highly efficient homologous recombination (Reinhard *et al.*, 2004) in
119 transformed protoplasts (Hohe & Reski, 2002). For the generation of targeted *pinC* mutants the region
120 upstream from the beginning of the first exon to the untranslated region after exon six was amplified
121 (2915 bp) from genomic DNA using the following primers: P3-KO Fw + P3-KO Rv (Supp. Tab. 1). The
122 amplified fragment was sub-cloned into the vector *pJET1.2*. Using *SacI* and *NcoI* a piece of the *PpPINC*
123 gene (1696 bp) was replaced with a sulfadiazine selection cassette (Parsons *et al.*, 2012). For the
124 generation of the reporter line, 2.1 kb upstream of the start codon of the *PpPINC* gene were fused to the
125 citrine cds and nos terminator via Gibson cloning (Gibson *et al.*, 2009), upper case letters are for *PpPINC*
126 promoter amplification: 5PinCprom_f+CA5 + 3PinCprom_r+Citrin (Supp. Tab. 1). The expression
127 cassette was cloned between homologous regions of the carbonic anhydrase locus (Wiedemann *et al.*,
128 2018), erasing the citrine expression of the parental plant when correctly integrated into the genome.

129 **Molecular analysis of transgenic lines**

130 Initial screening of lines was done with leaflet PCR, according to Schween *et al.* (2002), to test for the
131 presence of the construct. For RT-PCR total RNA was extracted from 6 weeks old gametophores, 21
132 days after the sporophyte induction started using the innuPREP Plant RNA Kit (Analytik Jena AG, Jena,
133 Germany) and reversely transcribed using oligo-d(T)₁₆ primers with Superscript III reverse
134 transcriptase (Life Technologies, Thermo Fisher Scientific). Analysis for the absence of *PpPINC* RNA
135 was performed with the gene-specific primers Pin3f_ex1-2 + Pin3r_ex2 (Supp. Tab. 1). Presence of
136 cDNA was tested with C45_fwd and C45_rev (Supp. Tab. 1) amplifying the constitutively expressed
137 gene L21. Transgene copy numbers were tested via quantitative Real-Time PCR according to Noy-
138 Malka *et al.* (2014). Genomic DNA was isolated from protonema, one week after the last tissue
139 disruption using the innuPREP Plant DNA Kit (Analytic Jena AG). Transgene copy numbers were

140 determined comparing relative values of the transgene 35S promoter (35SPqPCR_f + 35SPqPCR_r;
141 Supplemental Table 1) with the single copy transgene carbonic anhydrase line used in Wiedemann *et*
142 *al.* (2018), for normalization, the single copy gene CLF was used (Noy-Malka *et al.*, 2014).

143 **Tissue isolation for gene expression analysis using SMARTseq**

144 Triplicates of tissue samples were collected 18 days after gametophores were exposed to sporophyte-
145 inducing conditions. Mature archegonia and antheridia were collected manually using a stereoscope
146 (Olympus SZX7) and stored directly in TRIzol® (Fisher Scientific GmbH, Schwerte, Germany). All
147 lines used were grown together on the same plate. For each sample eight archegonia or antheridia were
148 collected. Tissues were homogenized using small pistils and mixed with chloroform. The aqueous phase
149 was then further processed using the Direct-zol RNA Microprep Kit (Zymo Research Europe GmbH,
150 Freiburg, Germany). The resulting RNA was treated with RiboLock RNase Inhibitor (Fisher Scientific
151 GmbH, Schwerte, Germany). The cDNA library was created at the Genomics Unit in the Instituto
152 Gulbenkian de Ciencia, Portugal according to Picelli *et al.* (2014). Libraries were sequenced using the
153 Illumina RNASeq platform from Novogene (Novogene Company Limited, Cambridge, UK).

154 **Transcriptomic data processing**

155 Raw data was trimmed using Trim Galore (Version 0.6.6; adapter stringency = 1 bp; minimum required
156 sequence length for retaining a read pair = 20 bp; 3'clipping = 1 bp). All further steps were done using
157 the Galaxy platform (Afgan *et al.*, 2018). The 150 bp paired-end reads were then mapped to the
158 *Physcomitrella* genome version 3.3 (downloaded from Phytozome (Goodstein *et al.*, 2012) using
159 HISAT2 (Galaxy Version 2.1.0; spliced alignment activated). Mapped reads were counted with feature
160 counts (Galaxy Version 2.0.1; excluding chimeric fragments; only fragments with both reads aligned,
161 GFF feature type filter = CDS; GFF gene identifier = gene_id). Differential gene expression was
162 analyzed using DESeq2 (Galaxy Version 2.11.40.6+galaxy1) and filtered for enriched gene ontology
163 terms with GOEnrichment (Galaxy Version 2.0.1). Quality of mapping and read counts were controlled
164 with MultiQC (Galaxy Version 1.11+galaxy0) and FastQC (Galaxy Version 0.73+galaxy0).

165 **Calcium measurement in sperm cells**

166 Sperm packets of single antheridia where extracted directly after being released from the antheridium
167 and spotted on polylysine-covered glass slides according to Horst & Reski (2017). Sperm cells where
168 incubated in a Fluo-4 solution according to Ortiz-Ramírez *et al.* (2017) for 20 minutes, photographed
169 (see microscopy) and pictures were then analyzed using ImageJ (Schneider *et al.*, 2012).

170 **Sporophyte count**

171 For all lines we analyzed all gametophores on the respective plate. After removal of the leaves,
172 sporophytes, embryos, empty vaginulae and aborted sporophytes were counted.

173 **Statistical analysis**

174 Stem length, leaf length and leaf width were tested with Student's t-Test with $p < 0.05$. Significance of
175 motility was assessed with one-sided ANOVA and Tukey-Kramer test, flagellar phenotype with one-
176 sided ANOVA. All tests were performed with Microsoft Excel and the XLMiner Analysis ToolPak.

177 **Protein alignments and motif analysis**

178 Needleman-Wunsch (Needleman & Wunsch, 1970) and multiple sequence alignments (Larkin *et al.*,
179 2007) with Clustal Omega (1.2.4) were performed using the European Bioinformatics Institute (EMBL-
180 EBI) web tools (<https://www.ebi.ac.uk/services>) (Madeira *et al.*, 2019). Needleman-Wunsch alignments
181 were performed with BLOSUM62, a gap penalty of 10 and extend penalty of 0.5. Multiple sequence
182 alignments were performed with default settings. Transmembrane protein motifs were assessed using
183 TMHMM 2.0 (Krogh *et al.*, 2001; Sonnhammer *et al.*, 1998).

184 **Flow cytometry**

185 Flow cytometry analysis was performed according to Heck *et al.* (2021).

186 **Microscopy**

187 For preparation of samples, we used an Olympus SZX7 stereoscope and for extraction of sperm
188 packages a Zeiss Axiovert microscope. Fluorescence and bright-field microscopy pictures were taken
189 with a Zeiss AxioPlan 100 with a Zeiss MRC5 camera and Zeiss AxioVision software (Version 3.8.2).

190

191 **Results**

192 **Physcomitrella PIN family**

193 The *Physcomitrella* genome (Lang *et al.*, 2018) encodes three canonical PIN proteins, PpPINA
194 (Pp3c23_10200), PpPINB (Pp3c24_2970) and PpPINC (Pp3c10_24880). These genes are similar in
195 structure and length (Supplemental Fig. S1 a), consisting like all canonical PIN proteins in land plants
196 of two transmembrane regions (five helices each), separated by a hydrophilic loop (Supplemental Fig.
197 S1 b). The transmembrane regions have the same length in all three proteins, whereas the hydrophilic
198 loop of PpPINC is 15 amino acids (AA) shorter than those of PpPINA and PpPINB (Table 1,
199 Supplemental Fig. S1 b). While PpPINA and PpPINB are very similar in their AA sequences, PpPINC
200 differs more, especially in the hydrophilic loop (Supplemental Fig. S2 a, c). While PpPINA and PpPINB
201 share a sequence identity above 86 %, for PpPINC it is below 65% compared to the others (Table 1,
202 Supplemental Fig. S2b). We hypothesise that PpPINA and PpPINB are the result of a gene duplication
203 event in the recent genomic history of *Physcomitrella* (Lang *et al.*, 2018), after the event that led to
204 PpPINC.

205 Compared to the canonical PIN proteins of Arabidopsis (AtPIN1,2,3,4,7), the hydrophilic loop of
206 Physcomitrella PINs are between 51 and 97 AA longer, while there is strong conservation in the
207 transmembrane regions (Supplemental Fig. S2b), as there is among all land plants (Bennett *et al.*, 2014a;
208 Zhang *et al.*, 2020).

209 **Table 1:** Identity, similarity and length of Physcomitrella PpPIN protein motifs

	A vs B	A vs C	B vs C	PpPINA	PpPINB	PpPINC
	Identity; Similarity of AA in %			Length AA		
TM N'	96.1;98.7	87.7;93.5	88.4;93.5	155	155	155
HL	86.3;91.4	64.7;76.9	64.4;76.8	409	409	394
TM C'	95.3;98.7	80.0;88.0	77.3;86.7	150	150	150

210

211 A = PpPINA, B = PpPINB, C= PpPINC, TM N' = N-terminal transmembrane region, HL = Hydrophilic
212 loop, TM C'=C-terminal transmembrane region.

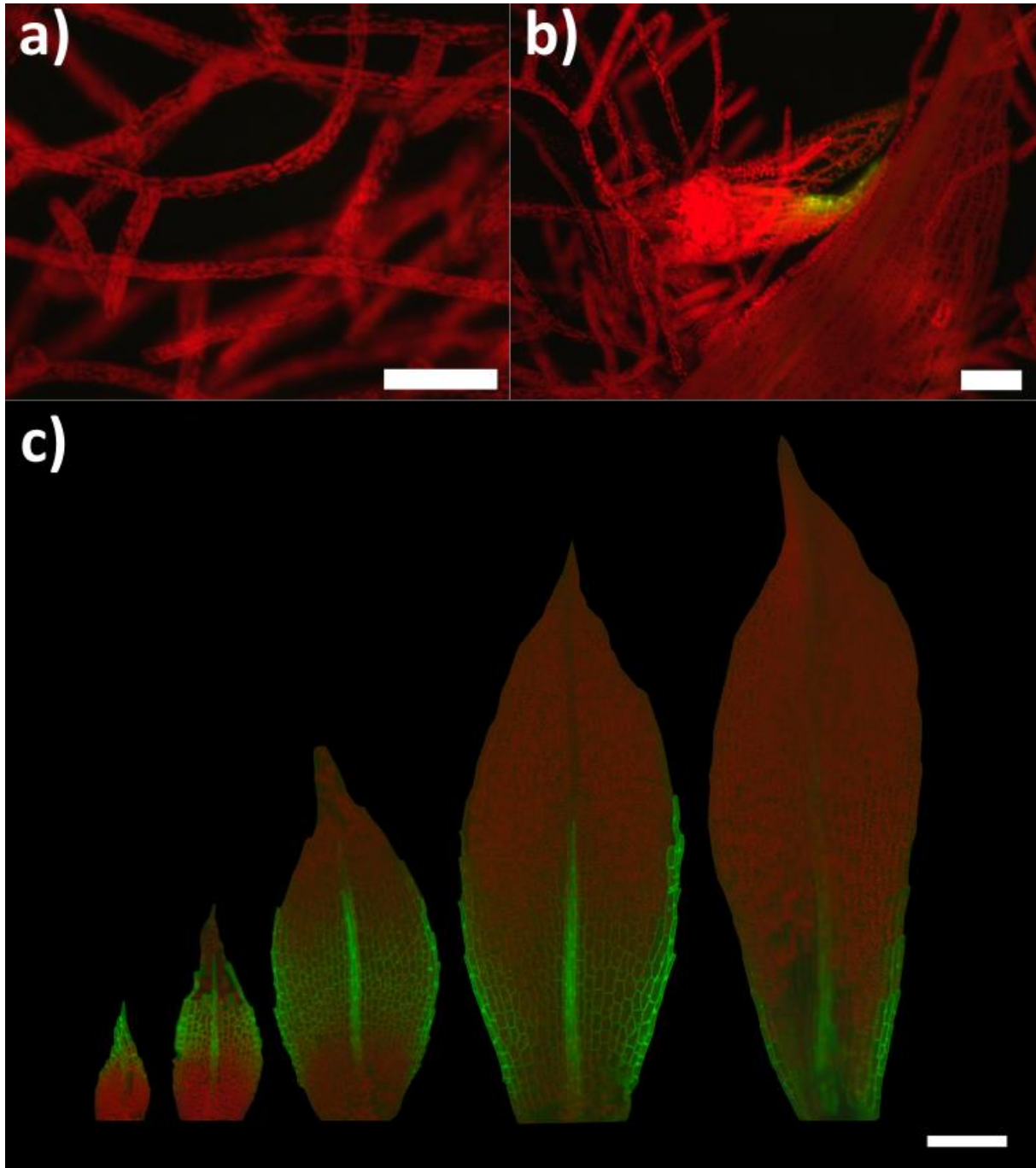
213

214 **Stage-specific expression of *PpPINC***

215 We compared *PpPIN* expression in publicly available expression data (PEATmoss database; Fernandez-
216 Pozo *et al.*, 2020) for the two Physcomitrella ecotypes Gransden and Reute in two or three datasets,
217 respectively (Hiss *et al.*, 2014; Ortiz-Ramírez *et al.*, 2016; Perroud *et al.*, 2018). As reported in Bennett
218 *et al.* (2014b), *PpPINA* is the highest expressed gene of the three, followed by *PpPINB* with lower, but
219 similar expression rates. Consistent across the three data sets, *PpPINC* is the lowest expressed of the
220 three. While there are some differences in the expression in single tissues in the different data sets, the
221 overall expression of *PIN* genes in both Physcomitrella ecotypes is very similar. In protonema, the
222 expression of all three *PINs* is the lowest, while the highest expression of *PpPINA* and *PpPINB* can be
223 found in gametophores and developing sporophytes. For *PpPINC*, the expression in vegetative tissues
224 is very low, while there is a dynamic expression during sporophyte development in both ecotypes, which
225 is nonetheless lower compared to the other two *PINs* in the same sporophytic tissues (Supplemental Fig.
226 S3).

227 For a closer look at the activity of PpPINC, we created a moss line expressing citrine (*pinCPromCit*)
228 under the influence of the native *PpPINC* promoter region (2.1 kb upstream CDS start). This construct
229 was targeted to the carbonic anhydrase-citrine tagged locus used in Wiedemann *et al.* (2018), because
230 of the high expression of the carbonic anhydrase gene. We screened for altered citrine signals in
231 transformed plants compared to the ever-present citrine expression of the parental line and thus
232 recovered a line with targeted integration of the *pinCPromCit* construct (Supplemental Fig. S4a, b).
233 Under standard growth conditions we did not observe any *PINC*-driven citrine fluorescence, neither in

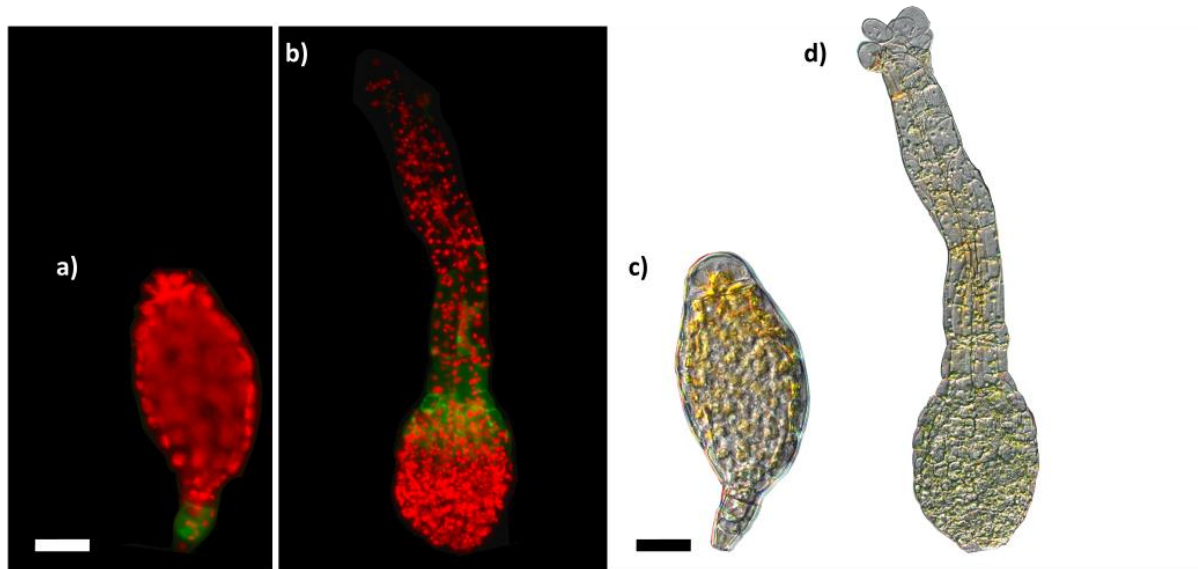
234 protonemal cells, rhizoids, stems, nor in adult leaves (Fig. 1a). In contrast, citrine fluorescence was
235 clearly visible in the apices of young leaves. From here, fluorescence proceeds towards the base until
236 maturation of the leaf. Intriguingly, *PpPINC* expression was highest in parts of the mid-rip and in leaf
237 margins (Fig. 1b, c).



238

239 **Figure 1: *PpPINC* is expressed in developing leaves of *Physcomitrella*.** Fluorescence microscopy to
240 visualize citrine expression in a *PpPINC* promoter line (green). Red marks autofluorescence of
241 chlorophyll: a) protonema (bar = 100 μ m) b) budding gametophore (bar = 100 μ m) c) the youngest
242 leaves of a moss gametophore (bar = 200 μ m).

243 In addition, citrine expression was detectable in developing gametangia. In mature antheridia close to
244 releasing their sperm cells (antheridium stage 9 in Landberg *et al.* (2013)), the signal was found in the
245 foot cells separating the antheridial body from the gametophore apex (Fig. 2a). In archegonia, a citrine
246 signal was visible only after the neck canal had opened, surrounding the transition zone between canal
247 and archegonial body above the egg cell (Fig. 2b).



248

249 **Figure 2: In *Physcomitrella*, *PpPINC* is dynamically expressed in reproductive organs.** With
250 fluorescence-microscopy we visualized citrine expression in a *PpPINC* promoter line (green). Red
251 marks autofluorescence of chlorophyll: a) and c) mature antheridium shortly before sperm cells are
252 released (scale bar = 25 μ m). Sperm cells can be seen inside the antheridium in c). b) and d) mature and
253 opened archegonium (scale bar = 50 μ m).

254

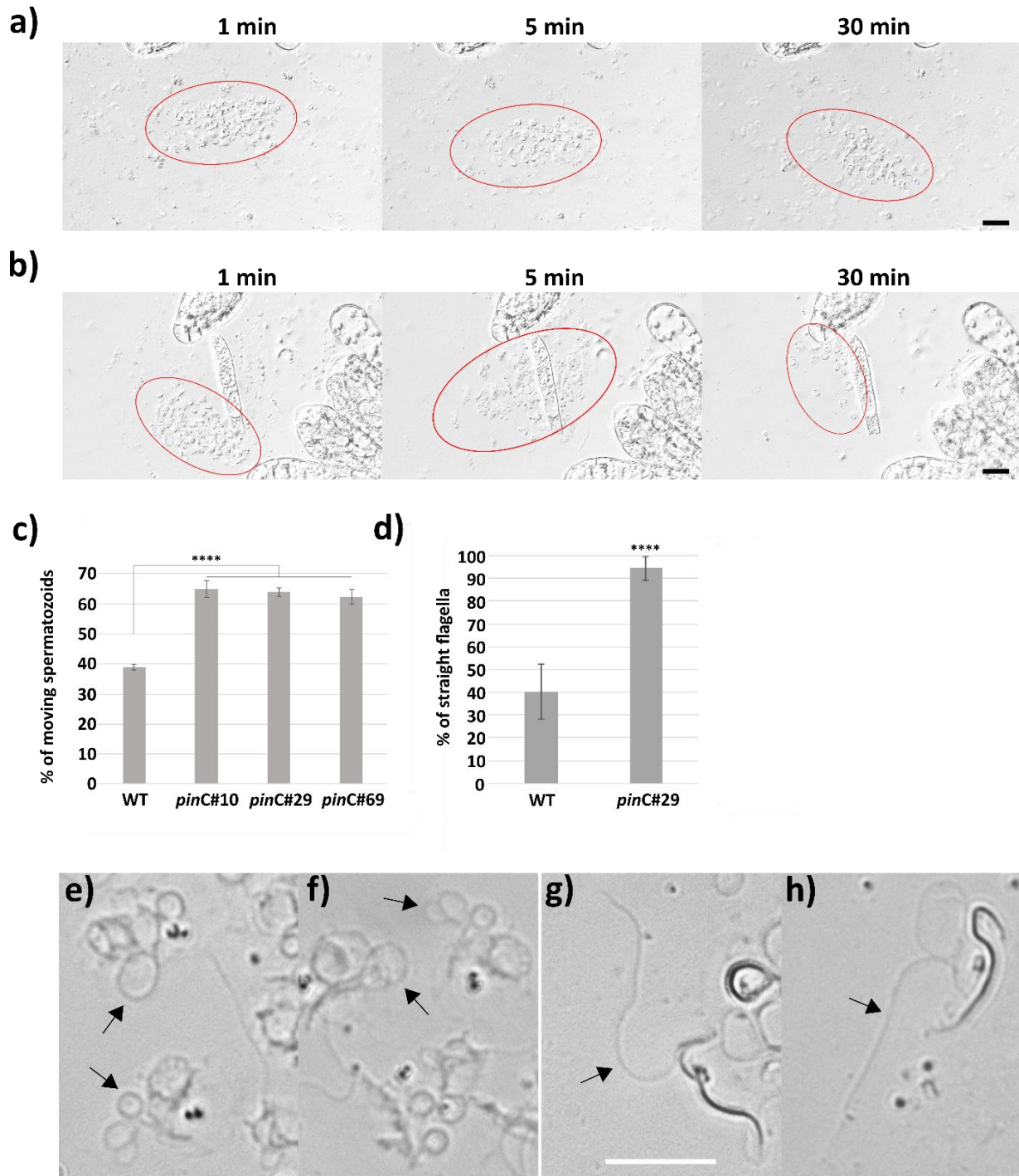
255 **Vegetative growth is unaltered in *pinC* mutant**

256 To understand the role of *PpPINC* in the *Physcomitrella* life cycle, we created targeted knockout mutants
257 via homologous recombination in the background of a fertile *Physcomitrella* WT. Out of 12 targeted
258 mutant lines devoid of *PpPINC* expression, three independent, haploid mutant lines (*pinC*#10, *pinC*#29,
259 *pinC*#69) with single integration of the knockout construct in the genome were chosen for further
260 analysis (Supplemental Fig. S5). On solid medium we could not detect obvious phenotypic differences
261 to WT regarding stem length, leaf length and leaf width as well as overall growth (Supplemental Fig.
262 S6).

263 **Altered sperm motility and phenotype in *pinC* mutants**

264 When WT and *pinC* mutants were grown in gametangia-inducing conditions, i.e. 15° C and short day
265 (Hohe *et al.*, 2002), male and female gametangia developed without any observable differences.

266 However, we detected an increased motility of *pinC* mutant sperm cells (spermatozoids). In WT, $38.9 \pm$
267 1 % of spermatozoids are motile 5 minutes after release from the opened antheridium. All three *pinC*
268 mutant lines showed a significantly increased motility ($p < 0.00001$) of more than 60 % compared to
269 WT ($pinC\#10 = 64.8 \pm 2.75$ %, $pinC\#29 = 63.8 \pm 1.51$ %, $pinC\#69 = 62.3 \pm 2.32$ %) (Fig. 3a, b, c). For
270 a deeper analysis we focused on the line *pinC*#29. When looking closer at the phenotype of the
271 spermatozoids we observed that a majority of WT spermatozoids have coiled flagella (59.8 ± 11.96 %
272 coiled) (Fig. 3d, g, h), while in the mutant *pinC*#29 the vast majority of spermatozoids have non-coiled
273 flagella (94.48 ± 5.22 %) (Fig. 3e, f). It was shown by Ortiz-Ramírez *et al.* (2017) that calcium
274 concentration in *Physcomitrella* sperm cells can alter their motility. However, staining with the calcium-
275 sensitive dye Fluo-4 did not reveal differences in calcium concentrations inside the sperms of WT and
276 mutant *pinC*#29 (Supplemental Fig. S7).



277

278 **Figure 3: Sperm morphology and motility in *Physcomitrella* WT and *pinC* mutants.** Mutant sperm
279 cells are more motile and have less coiled flagella compared to WT sperm cells. a) WT and b) *pinC#29*
280 spermatozooids one, five and 30 minutes after being released from a single antheridium, respectively (bar
281 = 20 μ m). Areas circled in red highlight spermatozooids after release. c) Percentage of moving
282 spermatozooids after being released from the antheridium (n = 10). d) Percentage of non-coiled flagella
283 compared to coiled flagella (WT: n = 7 antheridia, *pinC#29*: n = 9 antheridia). Asterisks in c) and d) =
284 $p \leq 0.0001$. e) and f) WT spermatozooids with coiled flagella marked by arrows. g) and h) *pinC#29*

285 spermatozooids with non-coiled flagella marked by arrows. e) – h) bar = 10 μ m. For better resolution of
286 sperm cells pictures in a, b, e-h are stacked pictures.

287

288 **Organ-specific differential gene expression**

289 To identify genes underlying the differences in sperm flagella phenotype, we performed RNAseq
290 analysis on WT and mutant gametangia. For this we collected mature archegonia and antheridia from
291 WT and the *pinC#29* mutant, cultivated on the same plate, 20 days after start of sporophyte induction.
292 For each line and organ, we pooled eight gametangia per sample which were collected on three different
293 occasions (three samples per organ and line). Mapping of sequenced samples resulted in alignment rates
294 of 71.8 – 93.8 % with the version 3.3 of the *Physcomitrella* genome (Lang *et al.*, 2018). With 150 bp
295 paired-end Illumina platform-based sequencing, we reached read counts between 19 and 39.8 million
296 for the feature coding sequence (CDS) (Supplemental Fig. S8). No reads could be mapped to the deleted
297 area of *PpPINC* in the mutant line *pinC#29*, which confirms the efficient gene knockout (Supplemental
298 Fig. S9). Between all mutant and all WT samples, we could not find significant differences in gene
299 expression. In contrast, we found a clear separation between male and female gametangia, while the
300 difference between WT and *pinC* mutant was not strong (Fig. 4a). When comparing the samples to each
301 other, we found that for the male samples (WT antheridia WM vs mutant antheridia PM) there were two
302 upregulated (*Pp3c26_6020*, *Pp3c26_3990*) and nine downregulated genes (*Pp3c9_8920*, *Pp3c14_8940*,
303 *Pp3c20_22670*, *Pp3c1_22810*, *Pp3c19_15670*, *Pp3c3_4950*, *Pp3c3_11110*, *Pp3c21_8410*,
304 *Pp3c12_11710*) ($p \leq 0.05$, Fold change (FC) $> \pm 2$, Table 2) (Supplemental Table 2a). Three of the
305 downregulated genes are not annotated so far, while the other genes show counts only in a local part of
306 the gene or exhibit obscure gene structures consisting of only one exon or 22 micro exons. Comparing
307 the female samples, we found one upregulated (*Pp3c11_4360*) and two downregulated (*Pp3c7_8820*,
308 *Pp3c6_26100*) genes (Supplemental Table 2b), while these genes also show expression only in one part
309 of the gene or show unusual gene structures. When comparing samples derived from antheridia against
310 archegonia, we observed a strong upregulation of genes in male gametangia of both lines. The ratio of
311 upregulated to downregulated genes is higher than 4. The highest number of upregulated genes was
312 found in the comparison between all male and all female samples with 1920 genes upregulated and 397
313 downregulated genes (Table 2). The results of all DEG experiments are compiled in Supplemental Table
314 3.

315 **Table 2:** Up- and downregulated genes in male (M) and female (F) tissue samples from *Physcomitrella*
316 WT (W) and *pinC#29* (P).

	Upregulated genes	Downregulated genes
PM vs WM	2	9
PF vs WF	1	2

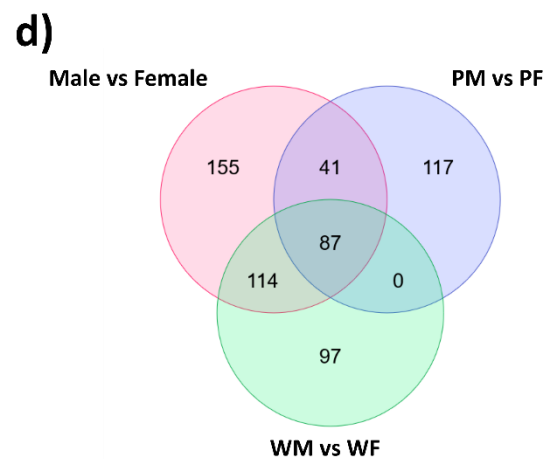
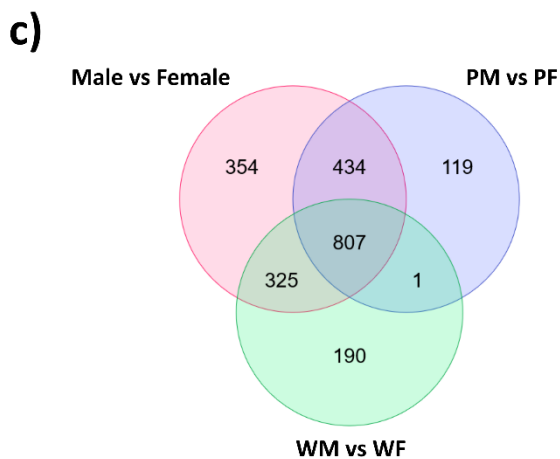
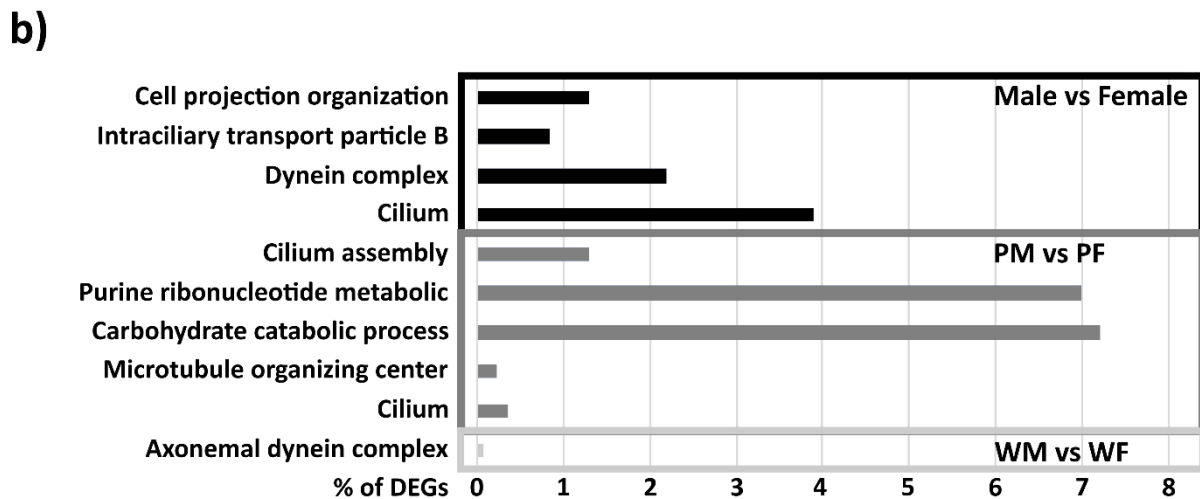
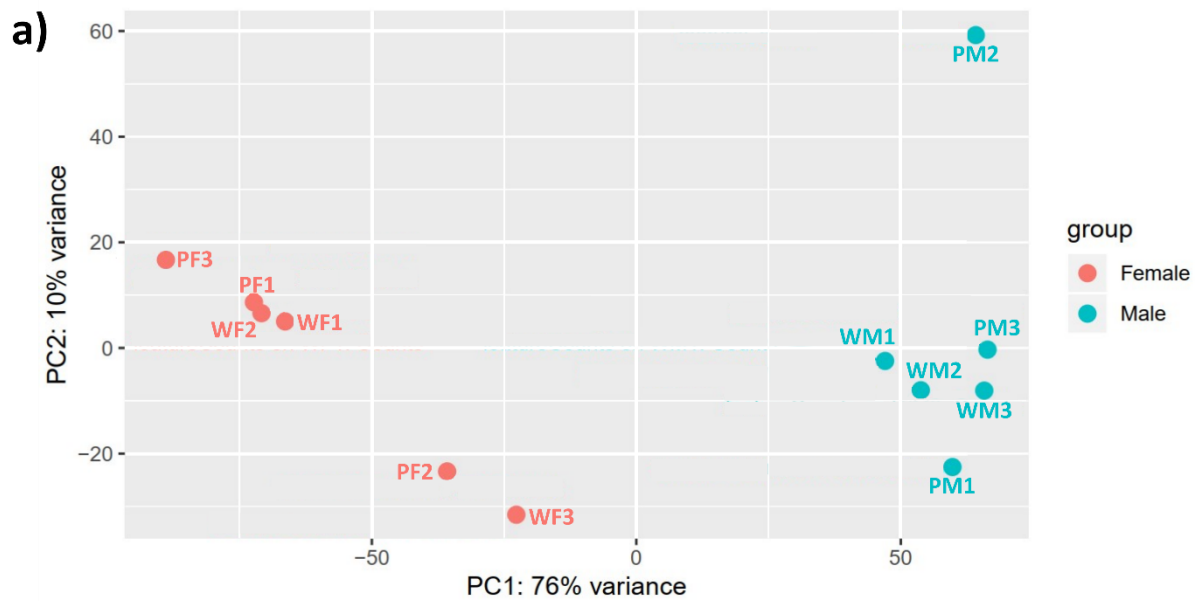
<i>pinC#29</i> vs WT	0	0
PM vs PF	1361	245
WM vs WF	1323	298
Male vs Female	1920	397

317

318 We analysed the gene ontology (GO) terms of the differentially expressed genes (DEGs) to look for
319 accumulation of specific terms for all experiments (p-value cut off 0.01) but could find enriched terms
320 only in the comparisons between sexes (Fig. 4b), we also found GO enrichment in the upregulated genes
321 only. For the comparison of WT antheridia against WT archegonia (WM vs WF) we found a weak
322 enrichment of the GO term axonemal dynein complex (0.08 %). In the experiment PM vs PF (mutant
323 antheridia vs mutant archegonia) we found that five GO terms were most prominent in the upregulated
324 genes, three of them can be associated with spermatogenesis and one each with energy consumption and
325 DNA synthesis (Cellular Components: cilium = 0.36 %, microtubule organizing center = 0.23 %;
326 Biological Process: carbohydrate catabolic process = 7.2 %, cilium assembly = 1.3 %, purine
327 ribonucleotide metabolic process = 7%). The same is true for the comparison of all antheridia samples
328 with all archegonia samples, where four GO terms associated with spermatogenesis were
329 overrepresented (Cellular Components: cilium = 3.9 %, dynein complex = 2.2 %, intraciliary transport
330 particle B = 0.84 %; Biological Process: cell projection organization = 1.3 %) (Supplemental Table 1).
331 Most of the upregulated DEGs found in the comparison of the sexes were shared between WT and
332 mutant (Fig. 4c). The number of DEGs found exclusively in the mutant was similar between upregulated
333 and downregulated genes (119 / 117). The WT shared the least downregulated genes with the mutant,
334 while contributing more downregulated DEGs to the comparison between male and female (Fig. 4d).
335 We identified some single DEGs, which had been reported to play roles in flagella formation or auxin
336 homeostasis. The coiled coil-like protein *Ppccdc39* (Meyberg *et al.*, 2020) was upregulated almost 3-
337 fold (FC) in male samples compared to female ones (FC = 2.98). While it is also significantly
338 upregulated in the comparison of WT male against female gametangia (FC = 2.4, p = 0.0005), the fold
339 change was even larger in the mutant samples, but due to high variation in the male samples not
340 statistically significant. The *arl13b* homologue *Pp3c1_40600*, which is involved in flagella stability, was
341 significantly upregulated in the comparison of male against female gametangia (FC = 3.44, p = 0.025),
342 which is also upregulated in the Reute ecotype compared to Gransden (Meyberg *et al.*, 2020). In all
343 comparisons of male against female tissues the arabinogalactan 31 homologue *Pp3c5_9210*, found to
344 be active during spermatogenesis (Meyberg *et al.*, 2020), was upregulated with a higher fold change in
345 PM vs PF (FC = 7.24, p = 2.06E-10) than in WM vs WF (FC = 4.62, p = 1.20E-07) (male vs female FC
346 = 5.34, p = 1.61E-08). We could also find that *PpBELL2* (Horst *et al.*, 2016) was significantly
347 downregulated in all male samples compared to female samples (PM vs PF: FC = -7.53, p = 8.17E-09;
348 WM vs WF: FC = -3.07, p = 0.013, male vs female: FC = -3.85, p = 0.0029). The two PHD clade IIa
349 genes *PpMS1A* and *PpMS1B*, are significantly higher expressed in male tissues compared to female

350 (*PpMSIA*: Male vs Female FC = 2.35, p = 0.029, *PpMSIB*: Male vs Female FC = 2.81, p = 0.036, WM
351 vs WF FC = 2.04, p = 0.035), as it was also reported in Landberg *et al.* (2022). While not being
352 differentially expressed, we observed expression of all six *PpTAR* genes in both gametangia, with
353 *PpTARB* being the highest expressed, followed by *PpTARA* and *PpTARC*, while *PpTARE* and *PpTARF*
354 being lower expressed and *PpTARD* the lowest of all six genes. We could also find higher expression
355 levels of the two *PpYUCB* and *PpYUCF* in both gametangia, while *PpYUCD* showed a very low, but
356 significantly upregulated expression in archegonia. This indicates active auxin synthesis in mature
357 gametangia. While our transcriptomic data reveal trends in general gene expression, we could not
358 identify any single DEG which could be responsible for the difference in sperm flagella phenotype in
359 the comparison of WT and the mutant.

360



361

362 **Figure 4: Transcriptomic analysis of Physcomitrella WT and mutant gametangia.** a) Variance of
 363 all samples. Samples group together into male and female, but there is no clear separation between WT
 364 and mutant samples. M = male (antheridia), F = female (archegonia), W = wild type, P = *pinC#29*. b)

365 All enriched gene ontology terms in upregulated DEGs in the comparison of all male against all female
366 samples (Male vs Female), all wild type male against wild type female (WM vs WF) and mutant male
367 against mutant female samples (PM vs PF). c) Venn diagram of all up- and d) downregulated genes in
368 the comparisons of male and female samples.

369

370 **No *PpPINC* differences between Gransden and Reute**

371 After we compared expression data of *PpPINC* in the Gransden and Reute ecotype and could not find
372 any differences, we checked for differences in genomic sequences using published data (Lang *et al.*,
373 2018). We compared the whole genomic *PpPINC* sequence from the 5'UTR to the 3'UTR and could
374 confirm the *PpPINC* gene to be identical between both ecotypes.

375 **Altered fertility and abortion rate**

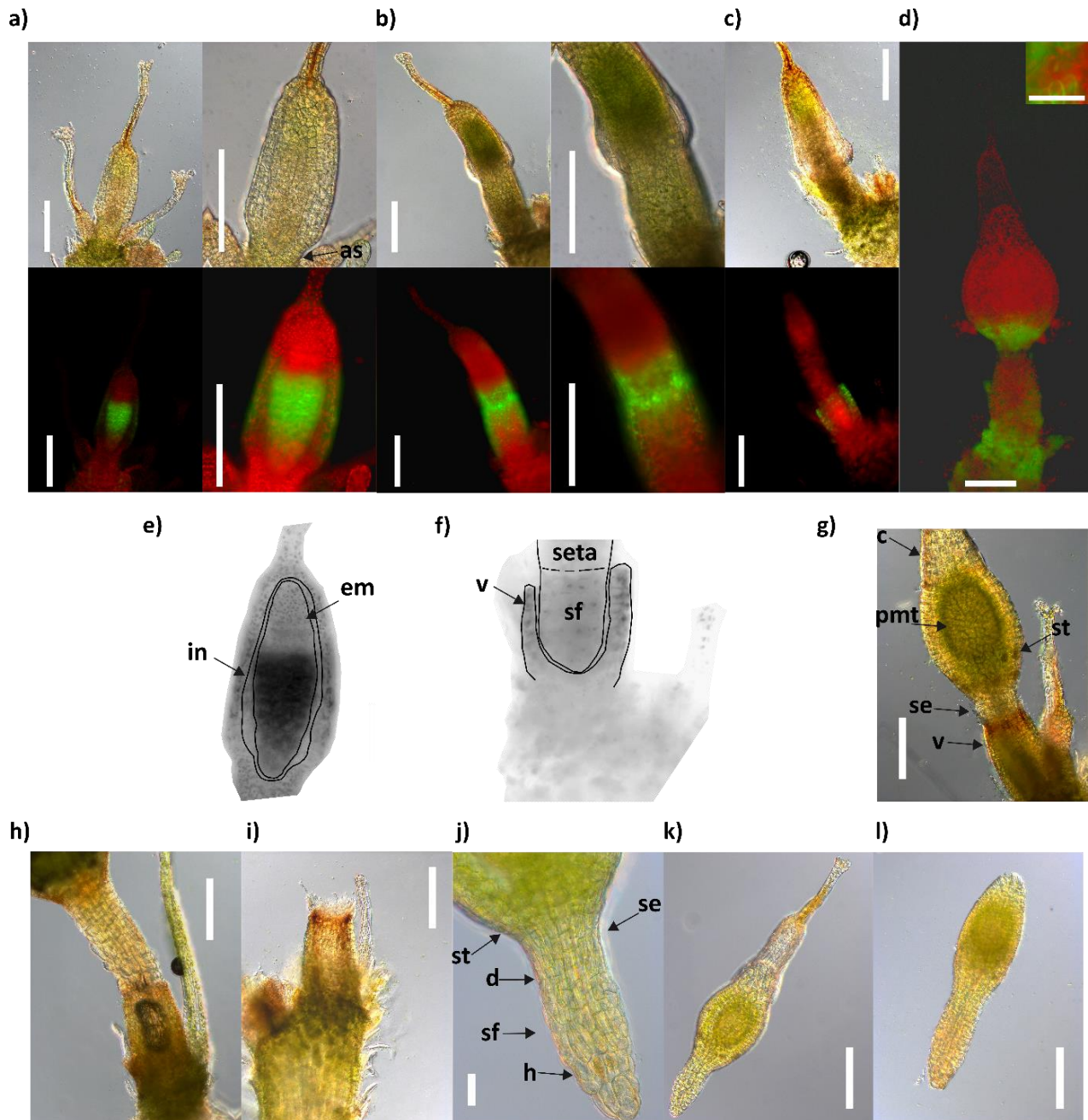
376 We did not observe any differences in the morphology of mature spore capsules or germination rates of
377 spores between WT and mutant (Supplemental Fig. S10). In contrast, the increased motility of
378 spermatozooids of the *pinC* mutant led to a significantly higher fertility rate in all three lines
379 (Supplemental Fig. S11). Low fertility rates of WT Gransden have been reported (Perroud *et al.*, 2011;
380 Hiss *et al.*, 2017; Meyberg *et al.*, 2020), and in our experiments 5.5 ± 0.4 % of all WT gametophores of
381 a colony produced a sporophyte. In contrast, all *pinC* mutants developed significantly more spore
382 capsules, ranging from 14.5 ± 0.6 % for *pinC*#69, 39.8 ± 1.6 % for *pinC*#10 and 63.2 ± 4.5 % for
383 *pinC*#29. In addition to increased fertility, we detected an increased abortion rate of sporophytes in the
384 mutants (gametophores with aborted sporophytes: WT = 0.1 ± 0.03 %, *pinC*#10 = 8.7 ± 1.3 %, *pinC*#29
385 = 35.4 ± 1.7 %, *pinC*#69 = 6.5 ± 0.2 %). The aborted sporophytes were no longer attached to the maternal
386 tissue (vaginula). Abortion happened around two weeks after fertilization of the egg cell (for reference
387 of sporophyte development see Ortiz-Ramírez *et al.* (2016) and Lopez-Obando *et al.* (2022)).

388 In the early embryo, *PpPINC* was active in the lower half, excluding the basal tip cells, as well as in the
389 walls of the maternal tissue that surrounds the young embryo (epigonium) (Fig. 5a). Development of the
390 sporophyte foot and the maternal tissue are highly synchronized. When the embryo has doubled in size
391 and the foot is secured in the now fully developed vaginula (Fig. 5b), the seta forms and rips apart the
392 surrounding tissue of the epigonium, while the later developing spore capsule also starts to separate (Fig.
393 5c), splitting the epigonium into the calyptra at the apex and the vaginula at the basis of the premeiotic
394 sporophyte. The expression of *PpPINC* slowly declines in the foot of the embryo (Fig. 5a-c), while it
395 increases in the maternal tissue during sporophyte foot growth, forming a distinct ring structure at the
396 border of maternal and sporophytic tissue (Fig. 5b). After the growth spurt, *PpPINC* expression can be
397 found only in the apophysis (region between seta and premeiotic tissue), while excluding the stomata
398 cells (Fig. 5d). We found that *Physcomitrella* develops a true-type vaginula, where the foot of the
399 sporophyte does not penetrate the gametophore tissue under the vaginula (Fig. 5e, f). Sporophyte

400 development is polar in *Physcomitrella*, where the foot of the sporophyte develops faster than the seta
401 or premeiotic spore capsule. The basis of the foot was not in direct contact with the maternal cells, which
402 is in line with an earlier report (Regmi *et al.*, 2017), while the vaginula tightened at its apical border to
403 the sporophyte, which is visible as a reddish-brown coloured ring after the emergence of the premeiotic
404 sporophyte (Fig. 5g, i). In the mature sporophyte, no *PpPINC* expression was detectable.

405 Aborted sporophytes in WT and mutants were in the premeiotic phase after the separation of the
406 epigonium (comparable to stage shown in Fig. 5g), and no longer attached to the vaginula. No visible
407 defects could be detected, apart from the separation of the gametophore. On one occasion we could
408 observe a sporophyte slipping out of the cavity of the vaginula, not losing contact as the basis of the foot
409 was stuck in the tighter apical end (Fig. 5h). Empty vaginulae clearly showed the coloured ring formation
410 at the apical opening (Fig. 5i). The aborted sporophytes had fully developed foot structures, with
411 haustorium cells at the basis, seta, stomata cells and a depression between seta and haustorium cells,
412 which we believe results from the securement of the sporophyte by the coloured ring formation (Fig.
413 5j). We could find no morphological differences in the aborted sporophytes between mutants and WT,
414 except for an increase in the number of abortions in the mutants. The calyptra could be removed without
415 resistance, some aborted sporophytes had already lost them (Fig. 5k, l).

416



417

418 **Figure 5: Sporophyte development in *Physcomitrella*.** a)-d) Bright-field and fluorescent microscopy
 419 pictures of *Physcomitrella* PpPINC reporter line. a) Embryo (probably 128 cell stadium) inside the
 420 epigonium, as = archegonial stalk. b) Embryo has doubled in size, vaginula and sporophyte foot are fully
 421 developed. c) Growth phase of seta, epigonium is about to rupture. d) Premeiotic sporophyte around 14
 422 days post fertilization. The fluorescent signal is concentrated in the apophysis excluding stomata cells
 423 (smaller picture, bar = 25 μ m). e) and f) = Negative grayscale cut out of a) = e) and c) = f), e) em =
 424 embryo, and in = inner wall epigonium are outlined in black. f) Fully developed vaginula (v) with
 425 sporophyte foot (sf) and growing seta are indicated by black lines. g) Premeiotic sporophyte, after the
 426 epigonium has split into the calyptra (c) and vaginula (v), pmt = premeiotic tissue, se = seta, st = stomata.
 427 h) Premeiotic sporophyte slips out of vaginula. i) Empty vaginula after abortion. j) Lower half of an
 428 aborted premeiotic sporophyte, d = depression, h = haustorium cells, se = seta, sf = sporophyte foot, st

429 = stomata). k) Aborted premeiotic sporophyte covered by calyptra. h) – k) = *pinC#29* mutant. l) Aborted
430 premeiotic sporophyte from WT, not attached to calyptra. Bars in a), c), d), g), h), i), k), and l) = 200
431 μm . Bar in j) = 50 μm .

432

433 Discussion

434 Auxin plays crucial roles in plant development (Santner & Estelle, 2009; Weijers & Wagner, 2016),
435 including *Physcomitrella* development (Decker *et al.*, 2006; Menand *et al.*, 2007; Fujita *et al.*, 2008;
436 Coudert *et al.*, 2017; Nemeč-Venza *et al.*, 2022) and biotechnology (Ruiz-Molina *et al.*, 2022). Although
437 PIN proteins are central in auxin transport and action (Adamowski & Friml, 2015; Sauer & Kleine-
438 Vehn, 2019; Ung *et al.*, 2022), only two of the three canonical *Physcomitrella* PIN proteins have been
439 fully characterized; the similar and relatively highly expressed PpPINA and PpPINB. In contrast, little
440 was known about the function of the more divergent and less expressed PpPINC. Here, we strived to
441 close this knowledge gap.

442 Our data on the expression of *PpPINC* in young *Physcomitrella* leaves is in line with an earlier report
443 (Viaene *et al.*, 2014). It was known that the single knockout of *PpPINA* or *PpPINB* has no visible effect
444 on the morphology of the gametophore (Bennett *et al.*, 2014b), and this is also true for *PpPINC*, as we
445 have shown here. However, a double knockout of *PpPINA* and *PpPINB* lead to elongated leaves and
446 stems, similar to treatments with exogenous auxin or auxin transport inhibitors (Bennett *et al.*, 2014b).
447 This means that, while *PpPINA* or *PpPINB* together with *PpPINC* can rescue the knockout of either *A*
448 or *B*, *PpPINC* alone cannot replace the function of both proteins in a double knockout line. The publicly
449 available expression data for canonical PIN proteins in the two *Physcomitrella* ecotypes Gransden and
450 Reute is not always comparable, as they are different experimental data sets describing specific tissue
451 stages. However, all three canonical PINs have a similar expression pattern regarding tissue and ecotype.
452 All three PINs are expressed in gametophores and sporophytes, with PpPINA and PpPINB being more
453 highly expressed than PpPINC. The expression of all three PINs in vegetative tissue has been reported
454 (Viaene *et al.*, 2014), as well as the important role of PpPINA and PpPINB in sporophyte formation
455 (Bennett *et al.*, 2014b). We could not find any differences between the expression of *PpPINC* in the
456 Gransden and Reute data sets. Further, we did not observe any vegetative phenotype alteration in *pinC*
457 knockout mutants. In contrast, we could identify PpPINC as an important regulator of spermatogenesis
458 and sporophyte development. We therefore conclude that PpPINC is functionally active only in
459 gametangia and sporophytic tissues, contrary to the other two canonical *Physcomitrella* PIN proteins.

460 It has been reported that the low fertility of the *Physcomitrella* ecotype Gransden is based on reduced
461 male fertility (Perroud *et al.*, 2011). This is partially caused by coiled up flagella of spermatozoids in
462 the Gransden ecotype, which results in low sperm motility (Meyberg *et al.*, 2020). We confirm this
463 spermatozoid phenotype for the Gransden ecotype, with a high percentage of coiled flagella and a

464 motility of under 50 %, resulting in a very low sporophyte production rate. In contrast, the *pinC* mutants,
465 which we generated in the Gransden background, resemble in their sperm morphology and fertility rate
466 the Reute ecotype, which has no coiled flagella, a high sperm motility and a high sporophyte rate (Hiss
467 *et al.*, 2017; Meyberg *et al.*, 2020). The Gransden ecotype was introduced by Engel (1968) as a
468 laboratory strain from one single spore from the UK, and has been propagated mostly vegetatively in
469 laboratories around the world since, while the Reute ecotype was introduced relatively recently as a
470 collection from Germany (Hiss *et al.*, 2017). Compared to Reute, Gransden accumulated somatic,
471 epigenetic mutations, probably leading to the faults in spermatogenesis (Haas *et al.*, 2020).

472 Here, we found that mature antheridia of a *PpPINC* knockout mutant have a higher expression of
473 spermatogenesis-related genes compared to WT. Activity of a *TAR* gene and *PpPINA* in the apical cells
474 of the mature antheridium has been reported (Landberg *et al.*, 2013; Landberg *et al.*, 2020), while there
475 are no reports of deviating gametangia in *PpPINA* mutants. Here, we also found evidence for expression
476 of auxin synthesis-genes in mature gametangia. With *PpPINC* being expressed in the foot of the mature
477 antheridium, contrary to *PpPINA* in the apical tip cell, it seems to be more important for spermatogenesis
478 controlling auxin homeostasis at the bottom of the antheridium than at the tip. Whether this mode of
479 action is part of a polar auxin homeostasis in a moss organ controlled by PIN proteins needs further
480 clarification.

481 Gaining the ability to move the flagellum is one of the final steps of spermatogenesis before
482 spermatozooids are released and activated. In mammals, this ability is gained in the epididymis, and is
483 controlled by different external and internal factors (Pereira *et al.*, 2017; O’Flaherty, 2019; Björkgren
484 & Sipilä, 2019). Due to the complexity of the process and a large number of influences, sperm
485 populations are not homogenous, but vary regarding phenotype, motility or activity (Gómez Montoto *et*
486 *al.*, 2011; Genau *et al.*, 2021; Martins-Bessa *et al.*, 2021). A key role in metazoan and *Physcomitrella*
487 spermatogenesis is played by the evolutionary conserved DNA Topoisomerase 1 α , which facilitates
488 chromatin condensation towards the compact sperm head (Gu *et al.*, 2022). Activation of the flagella of
489 released spermatozooids depends on changes in pH, calcium concentration, or presence of a
490 chemoattractant released by the egg cell (Nakajima, 2005; Suarez, 2008; Morita *et al.*, 2009). While
491 mammalian spermatozooids are transported through the epididymis during maturation, spermatogenesis
492 in the moss antheridium is stationary. This increases pressure on the exact spatiotemporal expression of
493 spermatogenesis-related genes. As in mammals, *Physcomitrella* releases heterogeneous sperm
494 populations from one antheridium. This was true for WT where motility (~40 %) and non-coiled flagella
495 (~40 %) seem to fit nicely, whereas in the *pinC*#29 mutant over 90 % of all spermatozooids were straight,
496 with an overall motility of 60 %. While the phenotype of the spermatozooids changed drastically in the
497 mutant, motility did not increase at the same rate. As we have shown, *PpPINC* is expressed only shortly
498 before sperm cells are released, reducing the time it can influence spermatogenesis to a short window.
499 Therefore, alterations in duration and strength of expression, which are likely to occur after somatic

500 mutations, could explain the differences in sperm morphology between the two ecotypes Gransden and
501 Reute (Meyberg *et al.*, 2020). The *PpPINC* gDNA sequence between the Gransden ecotype (v3.3
502 Phytozome genome ID:318) and Reute (SRX1528135; Hiss *et al.*, 2017) is identical. Given that the
503 mutant antheridia exhibit an increase in spermatogenesis-related gene expression together with an
504 overall increased motility and fertility, one could argue that *PpPINC* acts as a repressor for
505 spermatogenesis. The repression of spermatogenesis at the end of the whole process could be a
506 molecular signal for sperm release or activation of flagella. The difference in expression between both
507 ecotypes would be an earlier repression in Gransden, halting spermatogenesis when most of the flagella
508 are coiled and not yet ready for release, while the signal in Reute comes later, when spermatogenesis
509 has progressed to a majority of non-coiled sperm flagella. The unknown activating signal of *PpPINC*
510 expression could therefore be the culprit responsible for reduced male fertility in the Gransden ecotype.

511 Male sexuality is reduced in many bryophytes, with a female-biased sex ratio (Cameron & Wyatt, 1990;
512 Stark *et al.*, 2010; Pépin *et al.*, 2013; Bisang *et al.*, 2015; de Jong *et al.*, 2018), or size of the plants, with
513 the occurrence of dwarf males (nannandry), which are unique in bryophytes among land plants
514 (Pedersen *et al.*, 2006; Rosengren & Cronberg, 2014; Rosengren *et al.*, 2016; Lang *et al.*, 2021). Dwarf
515 males grow on the leaves of female plants (Pichonet & Gradstein, 2012; Rosengren & Cronberg, 2014;
516 Rosengren *et al.*, 2016; Lang *et al.*, 2021) and increase fertilization success (Hedenäs & Bisang 2012;
517 Rosengren & Cronberg, 2014), in the absence of a female, male spores develop normally. In
518 *Macromitrium japonicum*, dwarf males grew in culture on medium containing auxin, but developed
519 normally on auxin-free medium (Une, 1985). Dioecious mosses grow mostly vegetatively and
520 sporophyte production can be rare due to absence of a sexual partner, while monoecious mosses produce
521 sporophytes more frequently, as the chances for fertilization are higher (Haig, 2016). However, self-
522 fertilization leads to homozygous spores, while self-produced sperm are rarely outcompeted by non-self
523 sperm (Taylor *et al.*, 2007; Rosengren *et al.*, 2016). Reducing male fertility in a monoecious moss
524 increases the chance for outcrossing and could therefore be an internal mechanism, controlling the need
525 to refresh genetic material (McDaniel *et al.*, 2010; Haig, 2016; Szovenyi *et al.*, 2017). In a monoecious
526 moss like *Physcomitrella* with a very short life cycle (3-6 months) (Cove, 2005), pressure on mutations
527 regarding the sexual life cycle is strong, as changes in fertility would be lethal (Haig, 2016). Cultivation
528 in vegetative culture in laboratories around the world (Haas *et al.*, 2020) could reduce this pressure on
529 fertility, increasing the risk for severe mutations in the sexual signalling cascade (Meyberg *et al.*, 2020;
530 Haas *et al.*, 2020). As male gametes need more energy and are more complex to build than female
531 gametes (Rydgren & Økland, 2003; Stark *et al.*, 2000, 2009; Horsley *et al.*, 2011; Santos *et al.*, 2022),
532 risk for mutations is higher. This cost calculation would also favour intentionally reducing male rather
533 than female fertility, as more energy is required to constantly produce sperm cells, rather than egg cells,
534 which are waiting for fertilization, ending the gamete production cycle and starting the growth of
535 propagules.

536 In Arabidopsis, the expression of PIN proteins plays an important role during pollen development,
537 together with anther-specific expression of YUCCA genes (Cecchetti *et al.*, 2008; Dal Bosco *et al.*,
538 2012). PIN8 locates to the ER and regulates auxin homeostasis with a rate-limiting activity during pollen
539 grain development and pollen tube growth. It is functionally active only during male gametophyte
540 development and a knockout of PIN8 leads to misshaped and aborted pollen (Ding *et al.*, 2012; Bosco
541 *et al.*, 2012). The activity of PIN proteins in male gametophytic tissues is also reported in algae, in
542 *Chara vulgaris* a PIN2-like protein is expressed during spermatogenesis (Žabka *et al.*, 2016). Together
543 with our findings it seems plausible that PIN proteins can play important roles during male gametophytic
544 development in all plants. However, the exclusive function of PIN1 in Arabidopsis in the formation of
545 floral organs, could not be rescued by the *Physcomitrella* PpPINA protein expressed under the PIN1
546 promoter, while it complements the vegetative phenotype of the knockout (Zhang *et al.*, 2020).

547 The abortion of embryos is a natural process. Unfavourable environmental conditions, genetic
548 mutations, injury of the embryo or of maternal tissue can trigger abortion. In mosses, the normal abortion
549 rate differs among species (Stark & Stephenson, 1983; Stark *et al.*, 2009; Rosengren *et al.*, 2016;
550 Hedenäs & Bisang, 2019) and seems to be resource-limited (Stark *et al.*, 2000). Mosses have to allocate
551 their energy between clonal regeneration and sexual reproduction (Stark *et al.*, 2009), and sporophyte
552 survival positively correlates with vegetative growth prior to fertilization (Stark & Stephenson, 1983).
553 In these cases, aborted sporophytes were no longer supported with nutrients and stopped growing inside
554 the vaginula, contrary to the active abortion we observed here.

555 The haustorium cells of the sporophyte foot are not pressed against the vaginula tissue but surrounded
556 by a placenta-like space, while both tissues are separated by a diffusion barrier (Uzawa & Higuchi, 2010;
557 Regmi *et al.*, 2017). The foot of the sporophyte is wider than the seta with a small depression between
558 seta and foot, while vital sporophytes are tightly attached to the gametophore. We observed a clear
559 polarity during early embryo development favouring growth of the foot, while the upper part of the
560 embryo starts to increase only after the foot is secured in the vaginula. *PpPINC* is active in the maternal
561 tissues which will form the vaginula and the sclerotized ring structure after the sporophyte ruptures the
562 epigonium. Premeiotic sporophytes were aborted after the epigonium had ruptured and the sporophyte
563 foot had to be secured in the vaginula. The increased abortion rate in our mutants, combined with the
564 activity of *PpPINC* at the vaginula-seta junction, point to a regulation of sporophyte securement
565 controlled at least partially by *PpPINC*. Based on our observations, we suggest that the sclerotized,
566 brown ring structure at the vaginula-seta junction has the mechanical function of securing the sporophyte
567 foot.

568 The polarity of early embryo development we observed here in *Physcomitrella* as well as the functional
569 significance of the sclerotized ring structure is in line with the findings of Lorch (1909) in the moss
570 family Polytrichaceae. He reported that the sporophyte foot develops first, before the seta subsequently
571 elongates, and as the lumen in the vaginula is not completely filled by the foot, the sclerotized ring

572 structure must secure the sporophyte (Lorch, 1909). As we could not find a name for this ring structure
573 in the literature, we propose to name the reddish-brown ring structure, formed at the junction of vaginula
574 and seta, the Lorch ring.

575 Taken together, the canonical *Physcomitrella* PINC protein is functional in reproductive tissues only, an
576 important regulator of late spermatogenesis and of active abortion of premeiotic sporophytes. Thus, it
577 may integrate environmental signals with developmental programs to regulate sexual reproduction, at
578 least in moss gametangia and early stages of embryo development.

579

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583

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585 the experimental work. Data analysis of transcriptomic sequences was done by VML, guided by CR.
586 MB created the knockout constructs and first knockout plants. OH took pictures of spermatozoids and
587 aborted sporophytes. MR did measurements of stems and leaves, while data analysis for this was done
588 by VML. ELD and RR supervised research. VML wrote the manuscript with help by ELD and RR.
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593

594 **Declaration:** All authors declare to have no competing interests.

595

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600

601 **Data availability**

602 All RNA-seq samples as well as the DEG experiments created in this study are available via the NCBI
603 GEO project **GSE205257**. All moss lines used are available via the International Moss Stock Center
604 (IMSC; <https://www.moss-stock-center.org>) with the following accession numbers: WT = 40095,
605 *PinCPromCit* = 40917, *pinC#10* = 40918, *pinC#29* = 40919, *pinC#69* = 40420.

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866 **Supporting Information**

867 Supplemental Figure S1: Genetic structure and protein motifs of Physcomitrella PIN proteins

868 Supplemental Figure S2: Alignments of protein sequences of Physcomitrella and Arabidopsis PIN
869 proteins

870 Supplemental Figure S3: Expression data of Physcomitrella PIN genes from PEATmoss database

871 Supplemental Figure S4: Molecular evaluation of *pinCPromCit*

872 Supplemental Figure S5: Molecular analysis of Physcomitrella *pinC* mutant lines

873 Supplemental Figure S6: Phenotypical characterization of vegetative tissue for Physcomitrella wild type
874 (WT) and *pinC* mutant lines.

875 Supplemental Figure S7: Calcium concentration in Physcomitrella spermatozoids

876 Supplemental Figure S8: Quality control RNAseq

877 Supplemental Figure S9: Proof of *PpPINC* mutation in *pinC#29*

878 Supplemental Figure S10: Size of spore capsules and spore germination rate

879 Supplemental Figure S11: Spore capsule numbers

880 Supplemental Table 1: Primers used in Physcomitrella WT and mutant lines

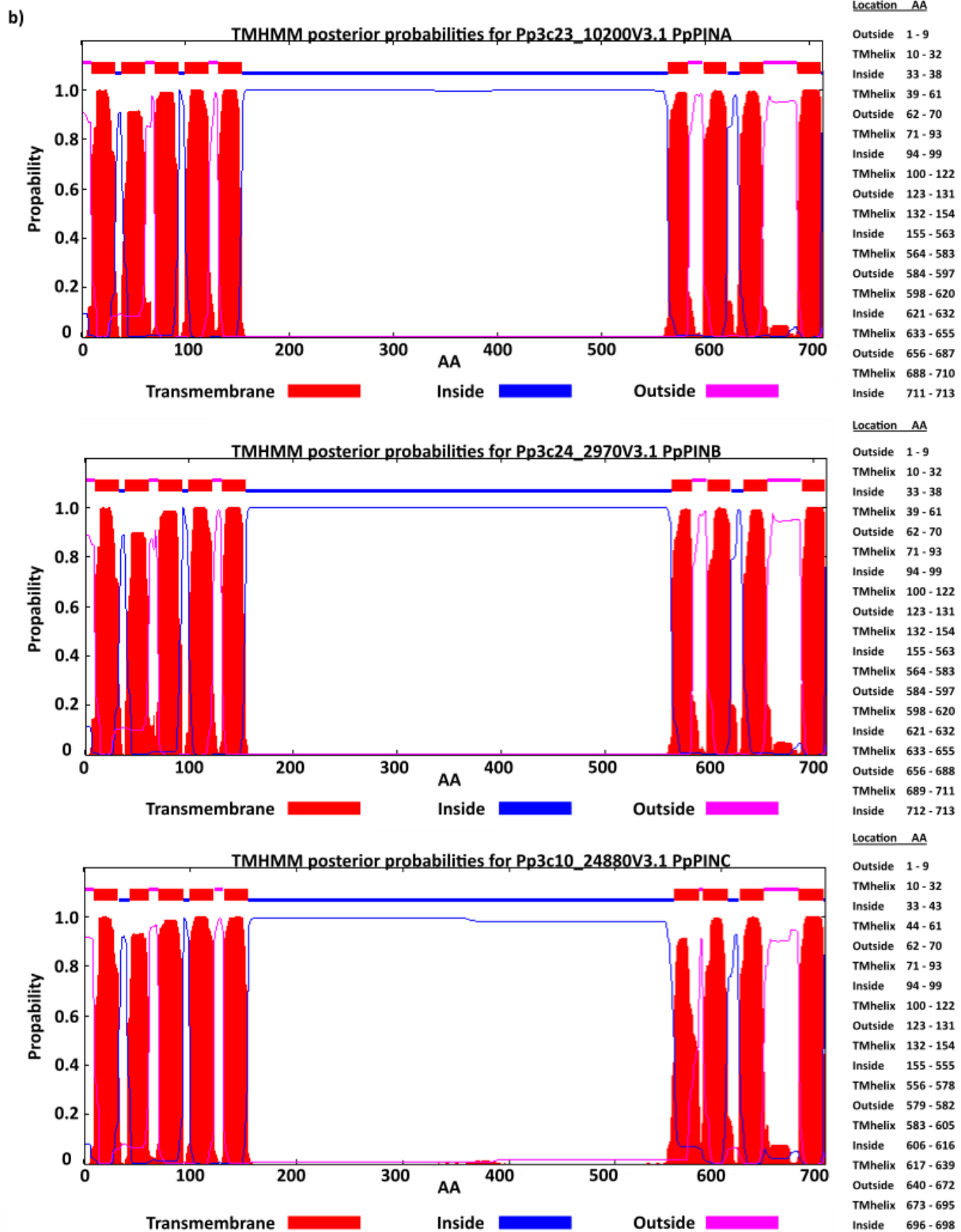
881 Supplemental Table 2: Differentially expressed genes in Physcomitrella WT and mutant

882 Supplemental Table 3: All DEG experiments, including table of single genes already identified in other
883 publications

884 a)

885

Gene	Exon 1	Intron 1	Exon 2	Intron 2	Exon 3	Intron 3	Exon 4	Intron 4	Exon 5	Intron 5	Exon 6
Pp3c_23_10200	1465	263	289	208	86	187	158	141	77	178	67
Pp3c24_2970	1462	258	292	203	86	195	158	139	77	191	67
Pp3C10_24880	1417	110	292	209	86	148	158	171	77	133	67



886

887 **Supplemental Figure S1: Genetic structure and protein motifs of Physcomitrella PIN**
 888 **proteins.** a) Genetic structure of canonical Physcomitrella PIN genes, length of exons and
 889 introns in base pairs (bp) b) Protein motifs of three Physcomitrella PIN proteins assessed with
 890 TMHMM2.0 using the DTU Health Tech online tool (Krogh *et al.*, 2001).

891 **a)**
892 PpPINA HL and PpPINB HL
893
894 Length: 409
895 Identity: 353/409 (86.3%)
896 Similarity: 374/409 (91.4%)
897 Gaps: 2/409 (0.5%)
898 Score: 1819.0
899

900	PINALOOP	1	AAKILIMQQFPENAASIVSFKVDSVMSLDGREPVLTEAEIGDDGKLVK	50
901				
902	PINBLOOP	1	AAKILIMQQFPENAGSIVSFKVDSVMSLDGREPVLTEAEIGDDGKLVK	50
903				
904	PINALOOP	51	VRRSVSSRSQGMHSAHSMSSKALTPRPSNLTGAEIYSMHSSVNLTPRD	100
905				
906	PINBLOOP	51	VRRSVSSRSQGMHSAHSMSSKALTPRPSNLTGAEIYSMHSSVNLTPRD	100
907				
908	PINALOOP	101	SSFNQGEFHSMSQRSPhRQSNFDTSDVYSLQSSRGPTPRSSNFNEENSK	150
909				
910	PINBLOOP	101	SSFNQGEYFSMMAQRSPhRQSNFDISDVYSLQSSRGPTPRTSNFNEENSK	150
911				
912	PINALOOP	151	DIHTHHRGLNMNSPRFAPPLYRNGMGARMFTPRPGLGGIGVPGTDCGTGHG	200
913			:	
914	PINBLOOP	151	DMHTHHRGLNLTSPRFVPPLYRNVAGGRMFMPRTGLGGLPVHGNDDPTGHG	200
915				
916	PINALOOP	201	TLSTLGAPGMGPDGRTIYPGSQTAINILTLGGAANVNATAPSTAVNTQIV	250
917			:	
918	PINBLOOP	201	SLSTLGTTPGMGPDGRTIYPGSQTAISLVTPGGTGNI-ATPLSSSLNTQIV	249
919				
920	PINALOOP	251	NPVYSPQASQIAKKVKDPKAS-PRADEDAKELHMFVWSANASPVSEAGLHV	300
921				
922	PINBLOOP	250	NPVYSPRASQIAKKVKDTRTS-PKSDEDAKELHMFVWSANASPVSEAGLHV	299
923				
924	PINALOOP	301	FGGNDTSANLQQRFDPKKEVRMLVHPQLDRGLAAASPRTYDEYTRDFDFSG	350
925				
926	PINBLOOP	300	FGGNDTSANLHQSFDPKKEVRMLVHPQSLDRHPEANPRTYDNYAQEDDFSG	349
927				
928	PINALOOP	351	NRNDLKLELDLDKGPRLD-KFGSTSTAEALTPKLAEDEAKKSMPPSAVMIK	399
929				
930	PINBLOOP	350	NRNDLKLELDLDKGPRLDNKFGSTSTAEALTPKVPFEDEAKKSMPPSAVMIK	399
931				
932	PINALOOP	400	LIAVMTFRK	408
933				
934	PINBLOOP	400	LIAVMTFRK	408
935				

936
937 PpPINA HL and PpPINC HL
938
939 Length: 411
940 Identity: 266/411 (64.7%)
941 Similarity: 316/411 (76.9%)
942 Gaps: 21/411 (5.1%)
943 Score: 1312.5
944

945	PINALOOP	1	AAKILIMQQFPENAASIVSFKVDSVMSLDGREPVLTEAEIGDDGKLVK	50
946			:	
947	PINCLOOP	1	AARILIMHRFPENAASIVSFKVESVMSLDGDPVLTAEAFRNDGKLVHR	50
948				
949	PINALOOP	51	VRRSVSSRSQGMHSAHSMSSKALTPRPSNLTGAEIYSMHSSVNLTPRD	100
950				
951	PINCLOOP	51	VRRSVSSRSQGVHSANHSIPSSKALTPRASNLSNAEIYSMNSSVNLTPRG	100
952				
953	PINALOOP	101	SSFNQGEFHSMSQRSPhRQSNFDTSDVYSLQSSRGPTPRSSNFNEENSK	150
954				
955	PINCLOOP	101	SSFDRGEDCSTMAHRDPNRKSNFDTSDIYSLQSSRGPTPRNSNFNEENSK	150
956				
957	PINALOOP	151	DIHTHHRGLNMNSPRFAPPLYRNGMGARMFTPRPGLGGIGVPGTDCGTGHG	200
958			: :	
959	PINCLOOP	151	EVHNHRGALNVNIPRFAPPLYRNGSGGRLFMARSDLGGVGALSFEPAAH-	199
960				
961	PINALOOP	201	TLSTLGAPGMGPDGRTIYPGSQTAINILTLGGAANVNATAPSTAVNTQIV	250
962			.	
963	PINCLOOP	200	-----SMGPDGRTIYPG-----ITVVT-----NSVAAVPASGVSTHII	232
964				
965	PINALOOP	251	NPVYSPQASQIAKKVKDPKAS-PRADEDAKELHMFVWSANASPVSEAGLH	299

```

966      |||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
967 PINCLOOP      233 NPVFSPLVSVQVAKKVNDRPRASIPKTDDEEAKELHMFVSSANPTSVSEGELH      282
968
969 PINALOOP      300 VFGGNDTSANLQQRFPDPEKVRMLVHPQLDRGL-AAASPRTYDEYTREDFS      348
970      |||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
971 PINCLOOP      283 VFGGSDISINLQQSVNPKELHVHVHPQSEHHLPGAANHKQTQDEHARQGF      332
972
973 PINALOOP      349 FGNRNDLKLEDLDDKDGPRLD-KFGSTSTAELTPKLAEDEAKKSMPPSAVM      397
974      |||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
975 PINCLOOP      333 FGNRRDLKVEDVDNNGSKLDKKFRSILTAELAPKHPMDEGKTSMPSSVM      382
976
977 PINALOOP      398 IKLIAVMTFRK      408
978      |||.|||||
979 PINCLOOP      383 IKLICVMTFRK      393
980

```

981 PpPINB HL and PpPINC HL

```

982
983 Length: 410
984 Identity:      264/410 (64.4%)
985 Similarity:   315/410 (76.8%)
986 Gaps:         19/410 (4.6%)
987 Score: 1306.0
988
989 PINBLOOP      1 AAKILIMQFPENAGSIVSFKVDSVMSLDGPEVLTAEIIGDDGKLVK      50
990      ||:|||||.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
991 PINCLOOP      1 AARILIMHRFPENAASIVSFKVESDVMSLDGPDVLTAEAFRNDGKLVHR      50
992
993 PINBLOOP      51 VRRSVSSRSQGMHSAHSMSSKALTPRPSNLTGAEIYSMHSSVNLTPRD      100
994      |||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
995 PINCLOOP      51 VRRSVSSRSQGVHSANHSIPSSKALTPRASNLSNAEIIYSMNSSVNLTPRG      100
996
997 PINBLOOP      101 SSFNQGEYFSMMAQRSRPHRQSNFDISDVYSLQSSRGPTPRTSNFNEENSK      150
998      ||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
999 PINCLOOP      101 SSFDRGEDCSTMAHRDPNRKSNFDTSDIYSLQSSRGPTPRNSNFNEENSK      150
1000
1001 PINBLOOP      151 DMHTHHRGLNLTSPRFVPPLYRNVAGGRMFMPRTGLGGLPVHGNPDTPGHG      200
1002      :|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
1003 PINCLOOP      151 EVHNHRGALNVNIPRFAPPLYRNGSGGRLFMARSDLGGVGVGALSFEPAAH-      199
1004
1005 PINBLOOP      201 SLSTLGTPLGMPDGRITYPGQTAISLVTPGGTGNIATPLSSSLNTQIVN      250
1006      .||||| | | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||
1007 PINCLOOP      200 -----SMGPDGRITYPG----ITVV----TNSVAAVPASGVSTHIIN      233
1008
1009 PINBLOOP      251 PVYSPRASQIAKKVDTRTS-PKSDDEAKELHMFVWSANASPVSEAGLHV      299
1010      ||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
1011 PINCLOOP      234 PVFSPVSVQVAKKVNDRPRASIPKTDDEEAKELHMFVSSANPTSVSEGELHV      283
1012
1013 PINBLOOP      300 FGGNDTSANLHQSFPDPEKVRMLVHPQSLRHP-EANPRTYDNVAQEDFSF      348
1014      ||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
1015 PINCLOOP      284 FGGSDISINLQQSVNPKELHVHVHPQSEHHLPGAANHKQTQDEHARQGF      333
1016
1017 PINBLOOP      349 GNRNDLKLEDLDDKDGPRLDNFKGSTSTAELTPKVPDEAKKSMPPSAVMI      398
1018      |||.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
1019 PINCLOOP      334 GNRRLKVEDVDNNGSKLDKKFRSILTAELAPKHPMDEGKTSMPSSVMI      383
1020
1021 PINBLOOP      399 KLIAVMTFRK      408
1022      |||.|||||
1023 PINCLOOP      384 KLICVMTFRK      393
1024

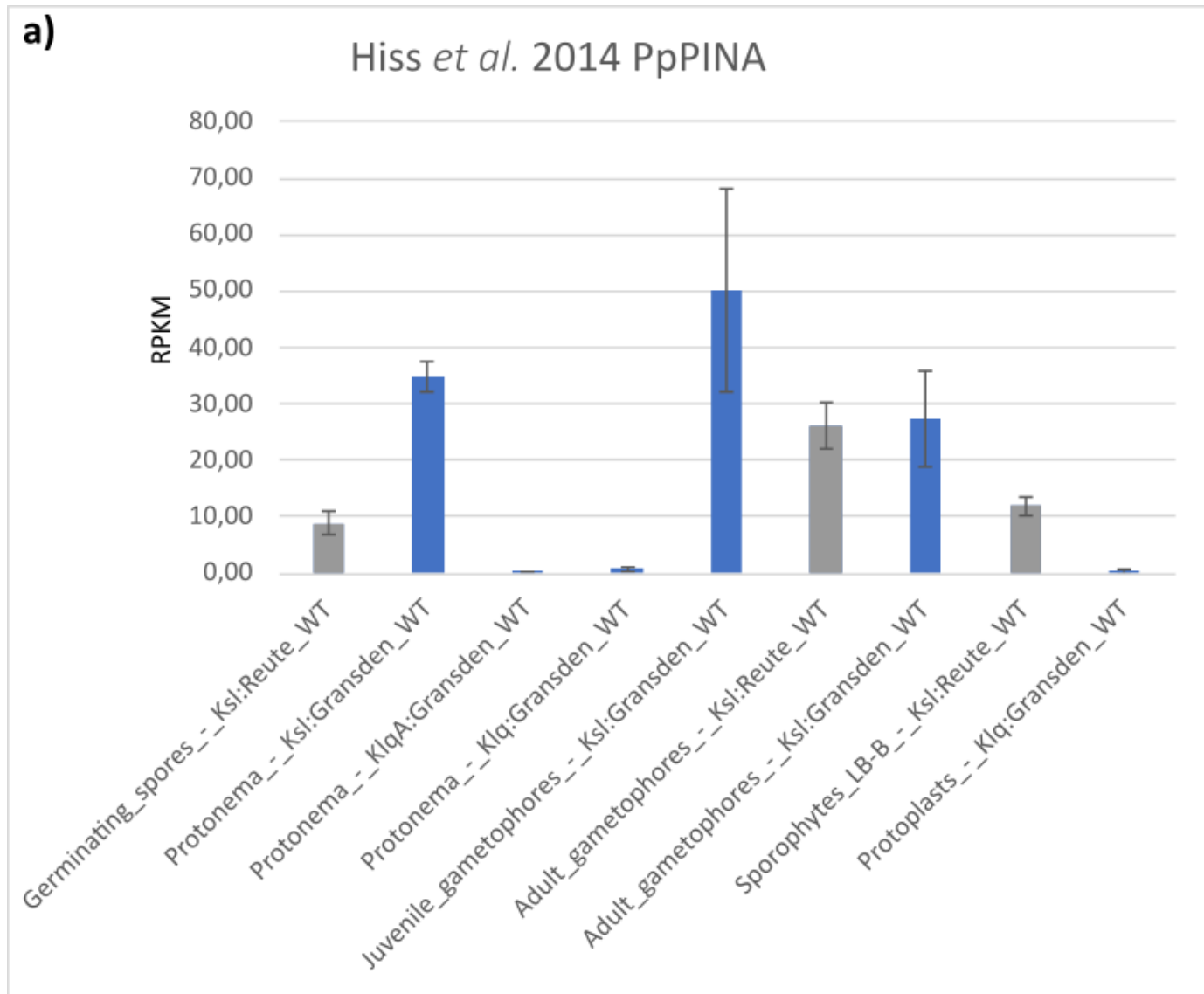
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1025 PpPINA TM1 and PpPINB TM1

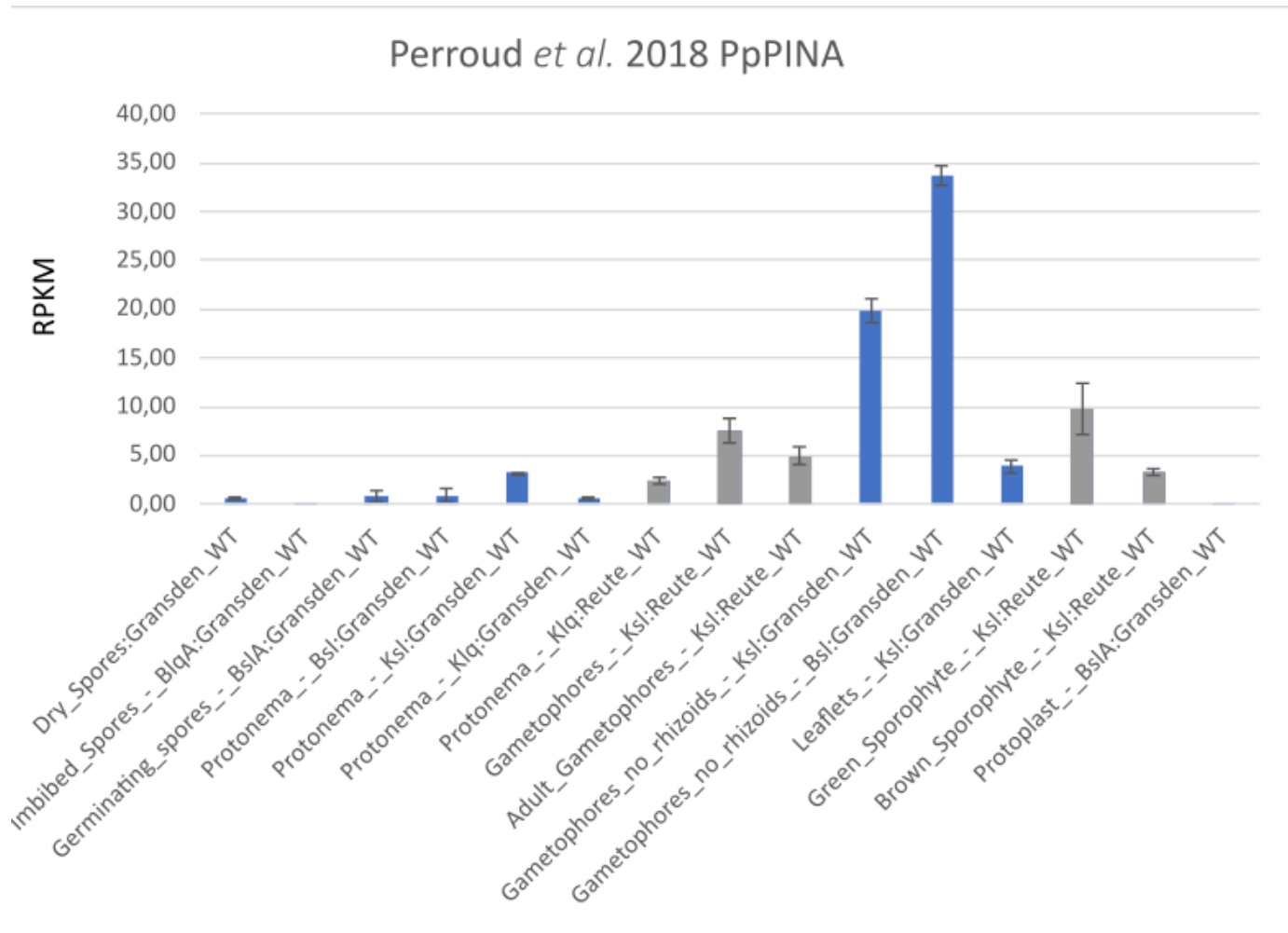
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1026
1027 Length: 155
1028 Identity:      149/155 (96.1%)
1029 Similarity:   153/155 (98.7%)
1030 Gaps:         0/155 (0.0%)
1031 Score: 792.0
1032
1033 PINATM1      1 MINGHDIYNVLSAMVPLVAMMLAYGSVKWWGILTPQQCGGINRFVSIFA      50
1034      |||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
1035 PINBTM1      1 MINGHDIYNVLSAMVPLVAMMLAYGSVKWWGILTPQQCGGINRFVSIFA      50
1036
1037 PINATM1      51 VPLLSFQFISGNNPYAMNFKFIAADAVSKVLVLLCGLWARYAKRGSLEW      100
1038      |||:|.:.||:|.|.:.||:| | :.:.||:|.|.:.||:|.:.||:|.:.||
1039 PINBTM1      51 VPLLSFQFISGNNPYAMNFRFIAADAVSKVFLVLLCGLWARYSKRGSLEW      100
1040

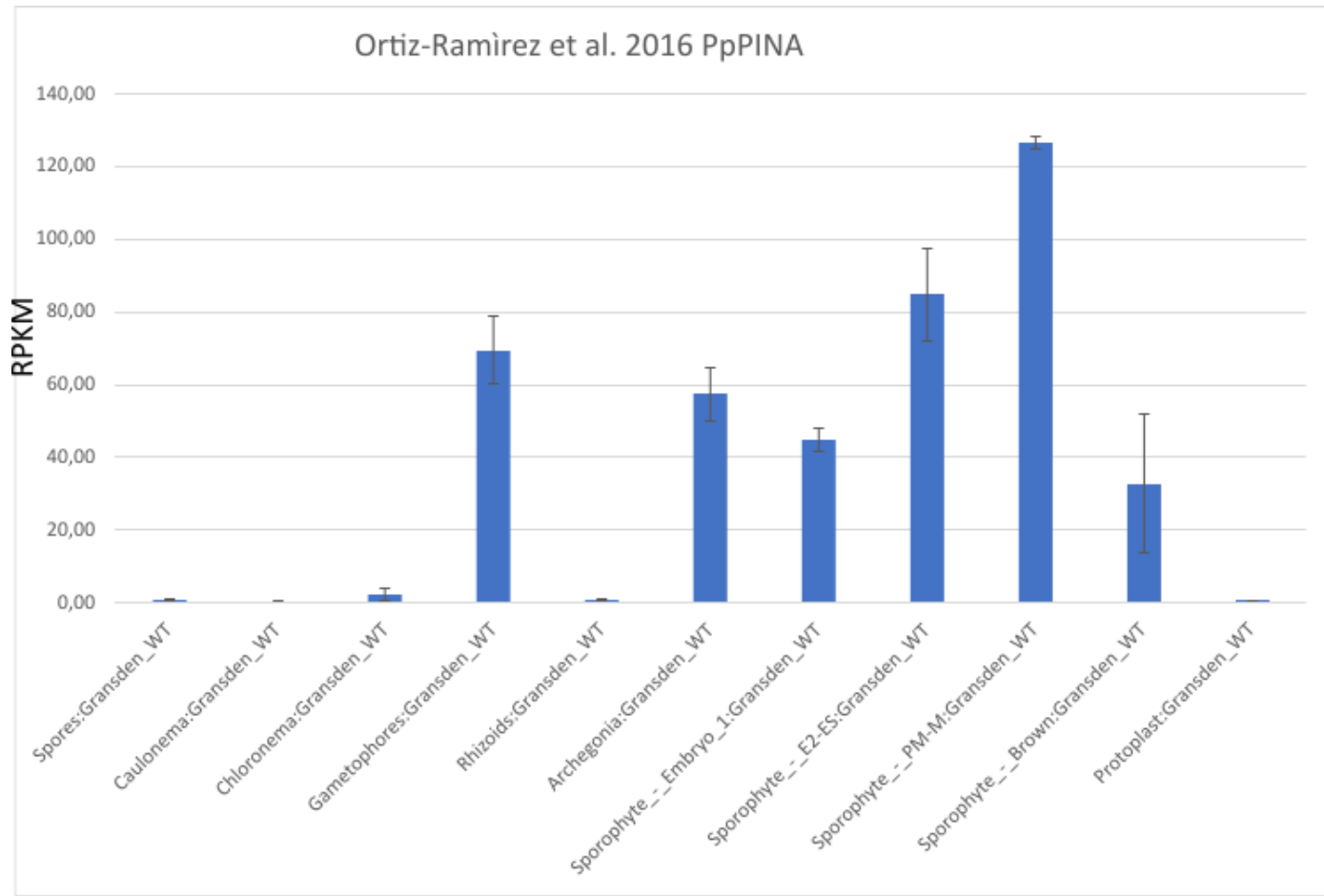
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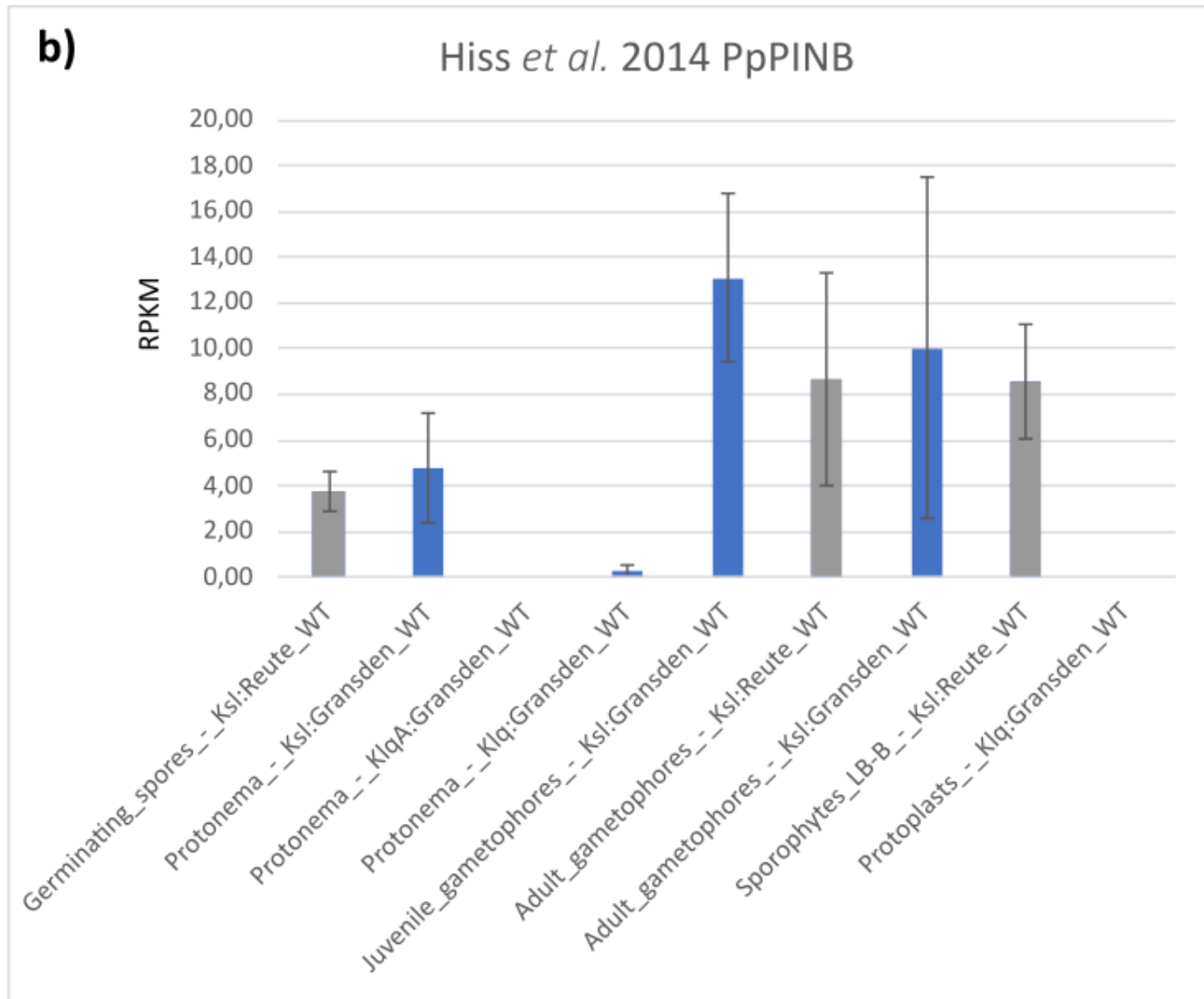
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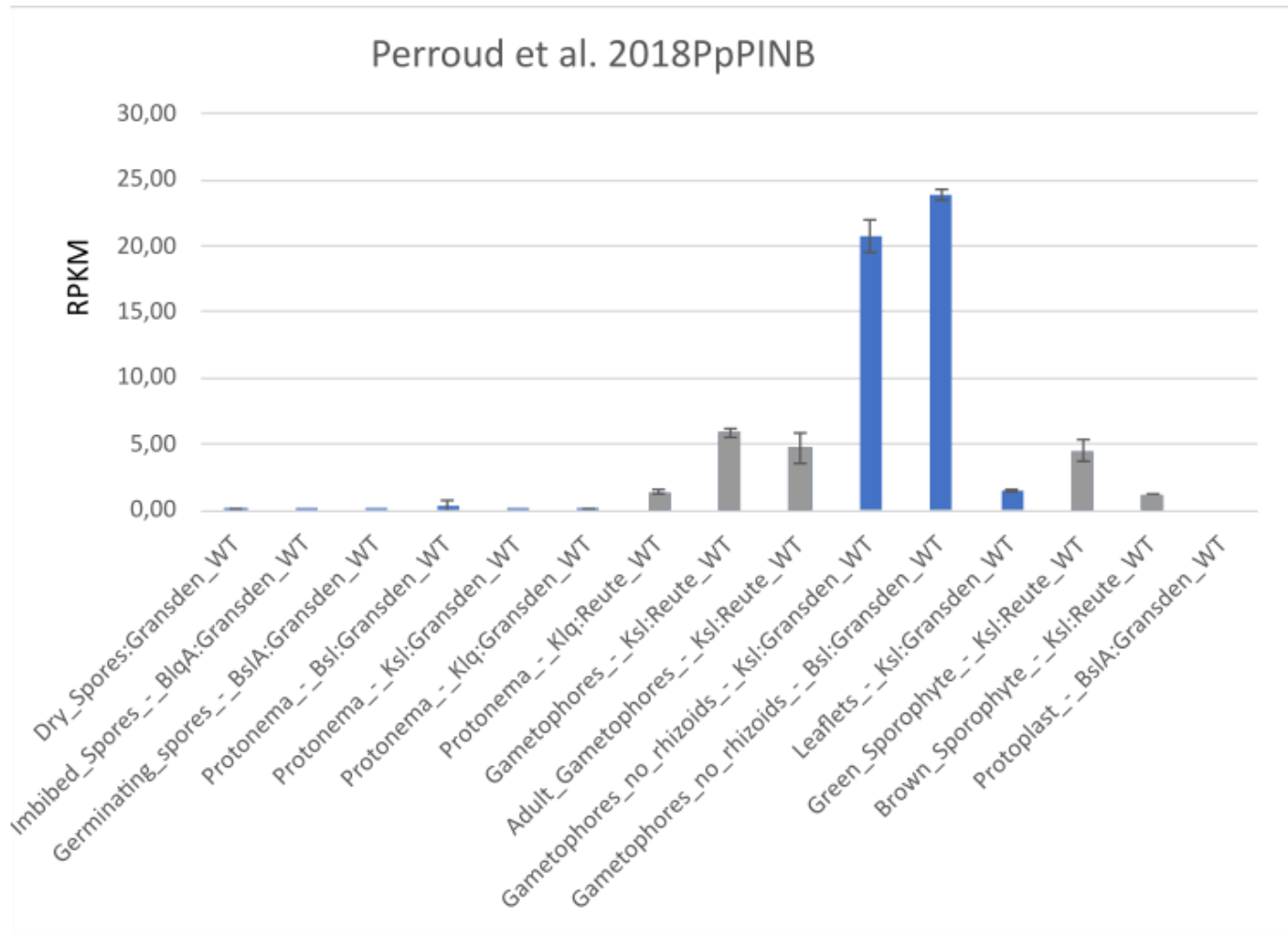
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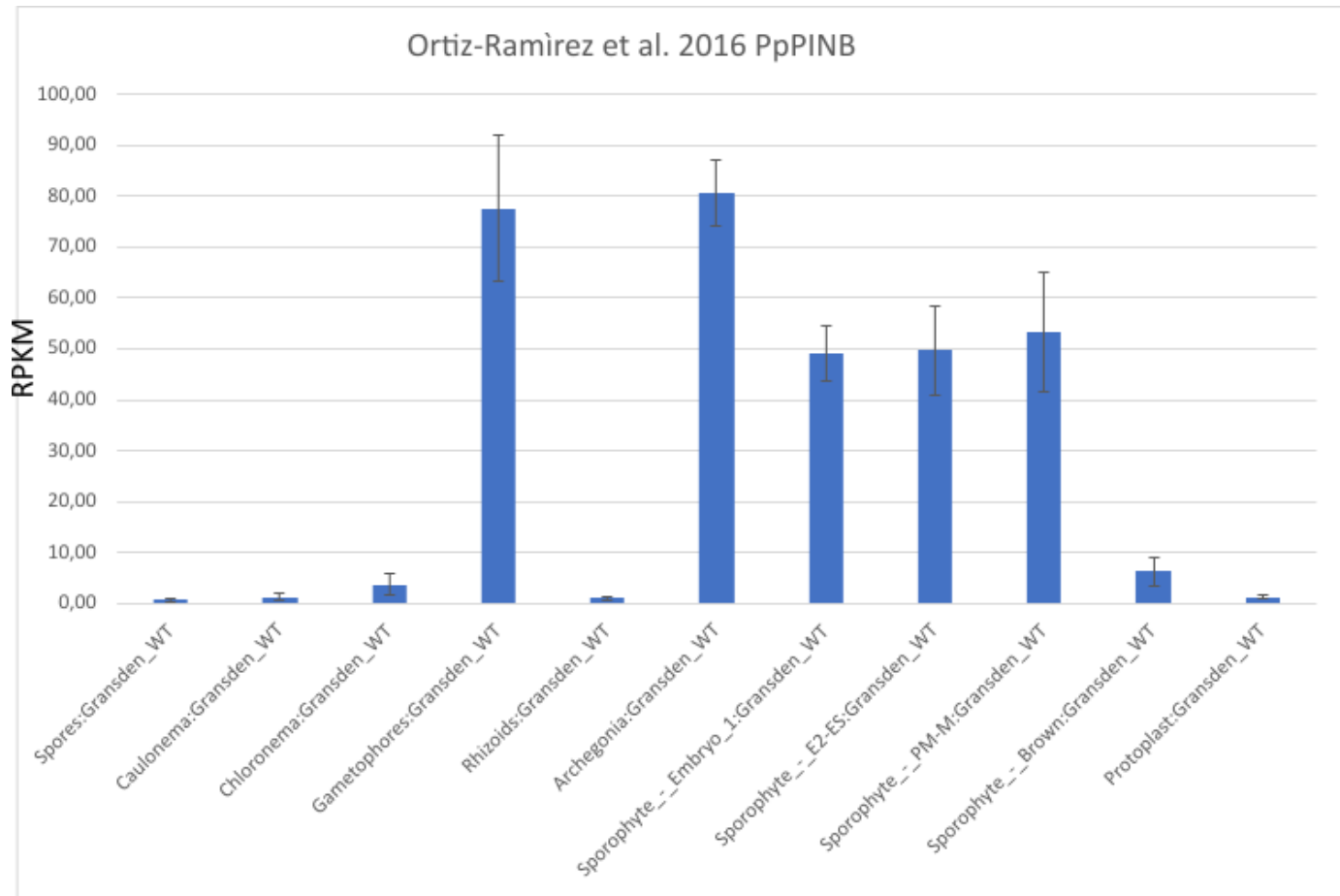
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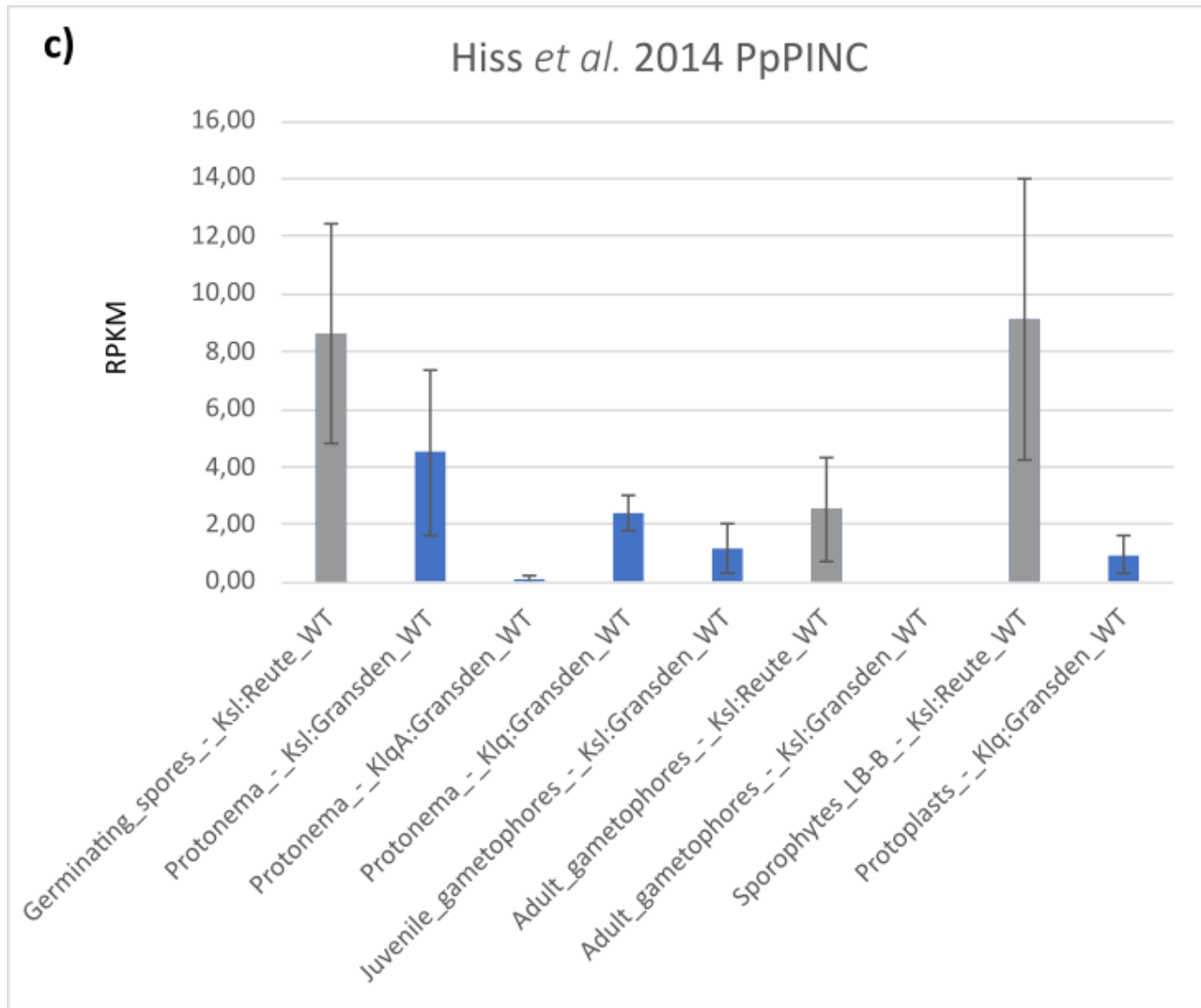
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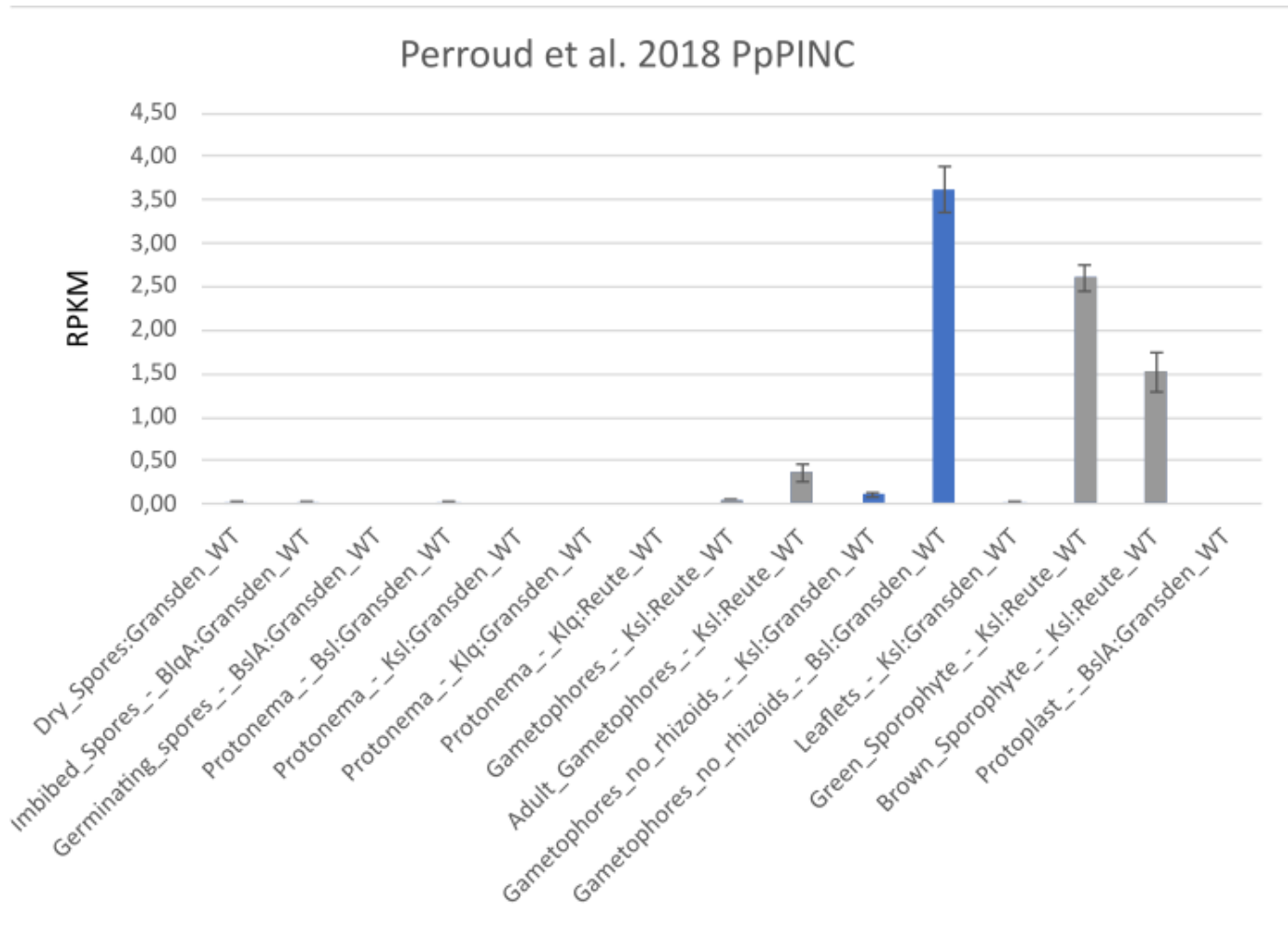
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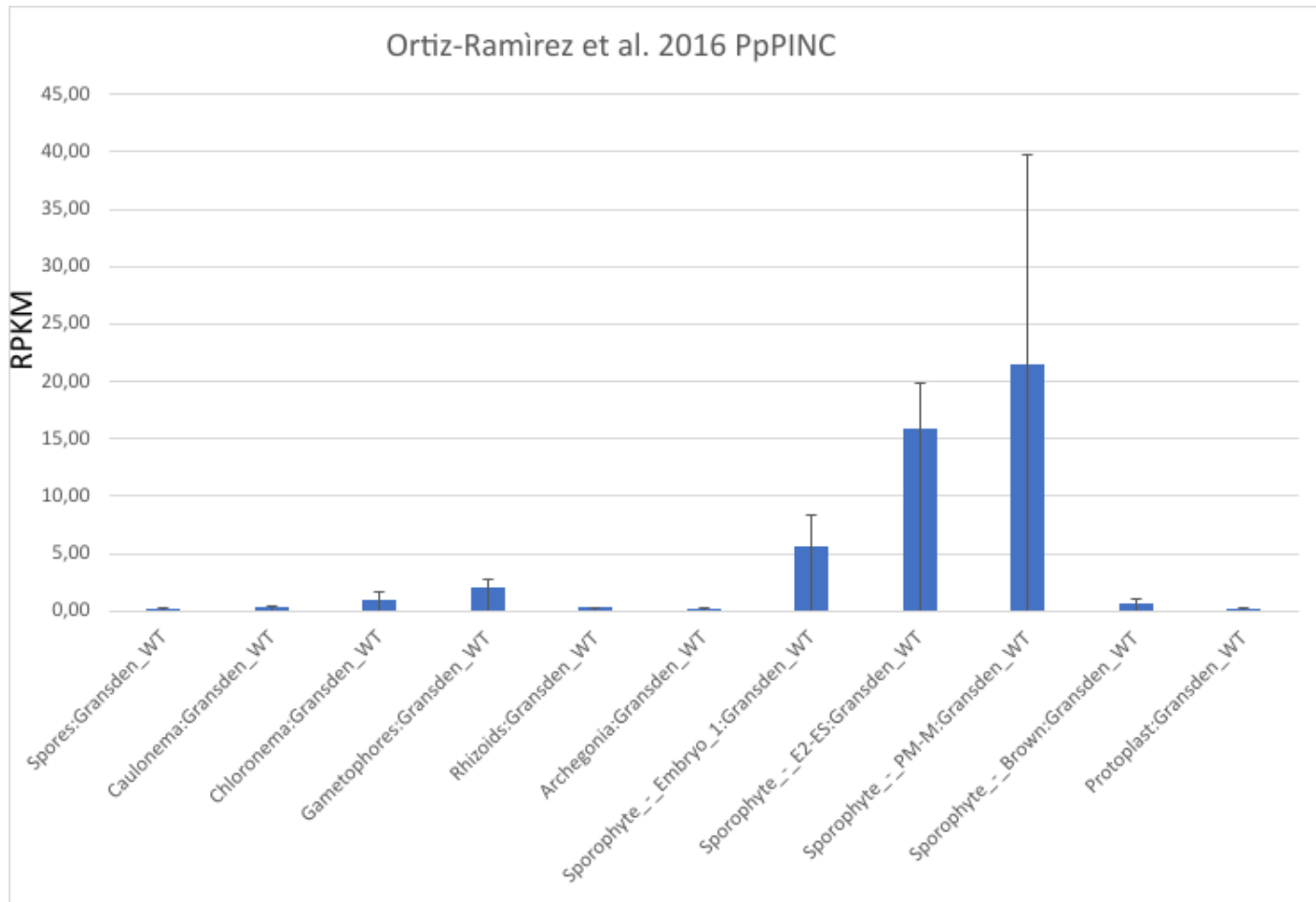
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1316



1317

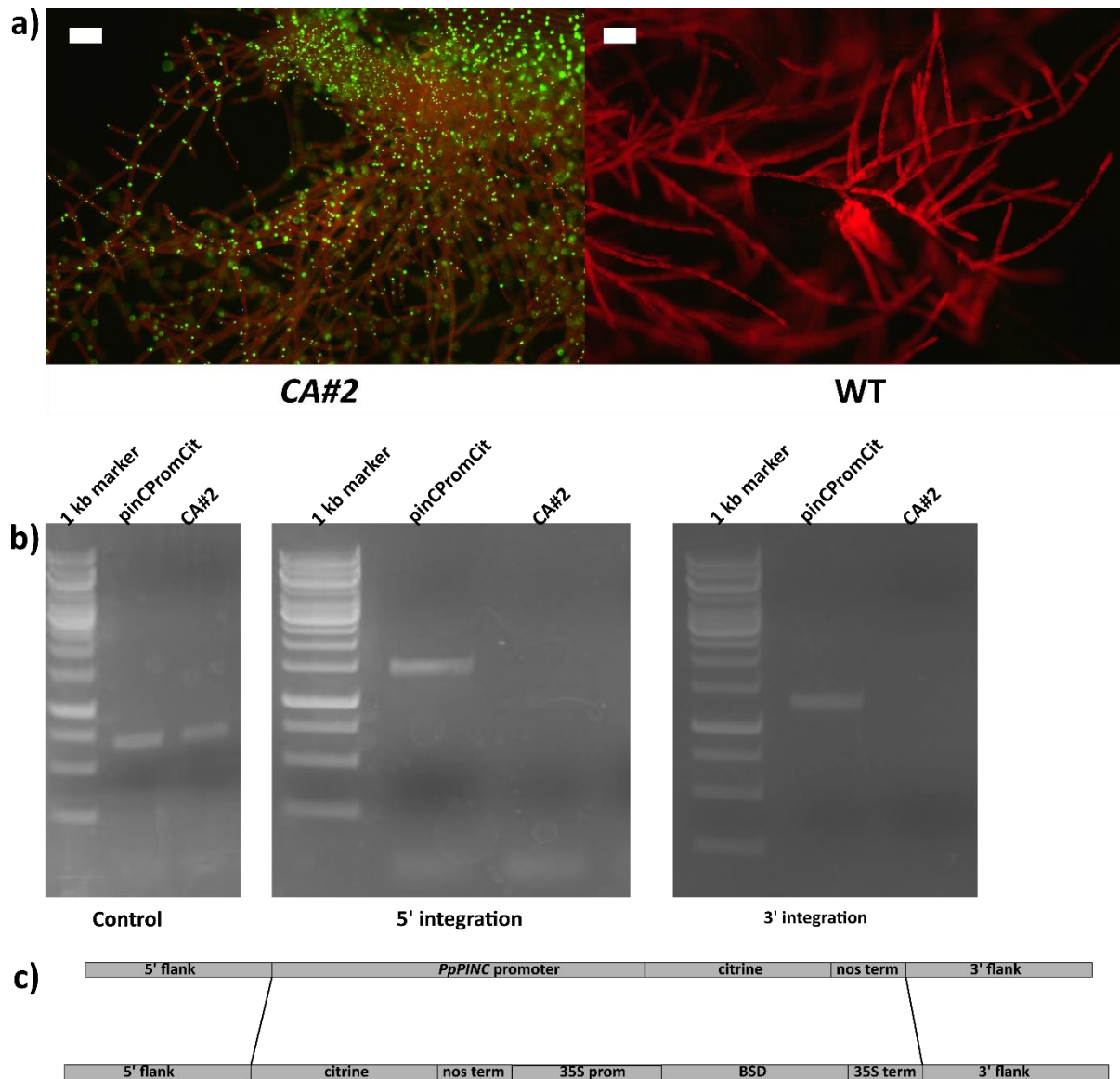


1318

1319

1320 **Supplemental Figure S3: Expression data of Physcomitrella PIN genes from**
 1321 **PEATmoss database.** Expression of *PpPINA*, *B* and *C* in different gene expression sets
 1322 accessed via the PEATmoss database (Fernandez-Pozo *et al.*, 2020) in the two
 1323 Physcomitrella ecotypes Gransden (blue bars) and Reute (grey bars), used data sets: Hiss *et*
 1324 *al.* (2014), Perroud *et al.* (2018), and Ortiz-Ramirez *et al.* (2016). a) *PpPINA* b) *PpPINB* c)
 1325 *PpPINC*. Blq = BCD liquid, BlqA = BCD (ammonium) liquid, Bsl = BCD solid, BslA =
 1326 BCD (ammonium) solid, Klq = Knop liquid, Ksl = Knop solid, Sporophyte LB-B = light
 1327 brown to brown sporophyte, Sporophyte PM-M = premeiotic to meiotic green sporophyte,
 1328 sporophyte Embryo 1= first embryo stage, sporophyte E2-ES = early developing
 1329 sporophyte. n = 3, RPKM = reads per kilobase per million.

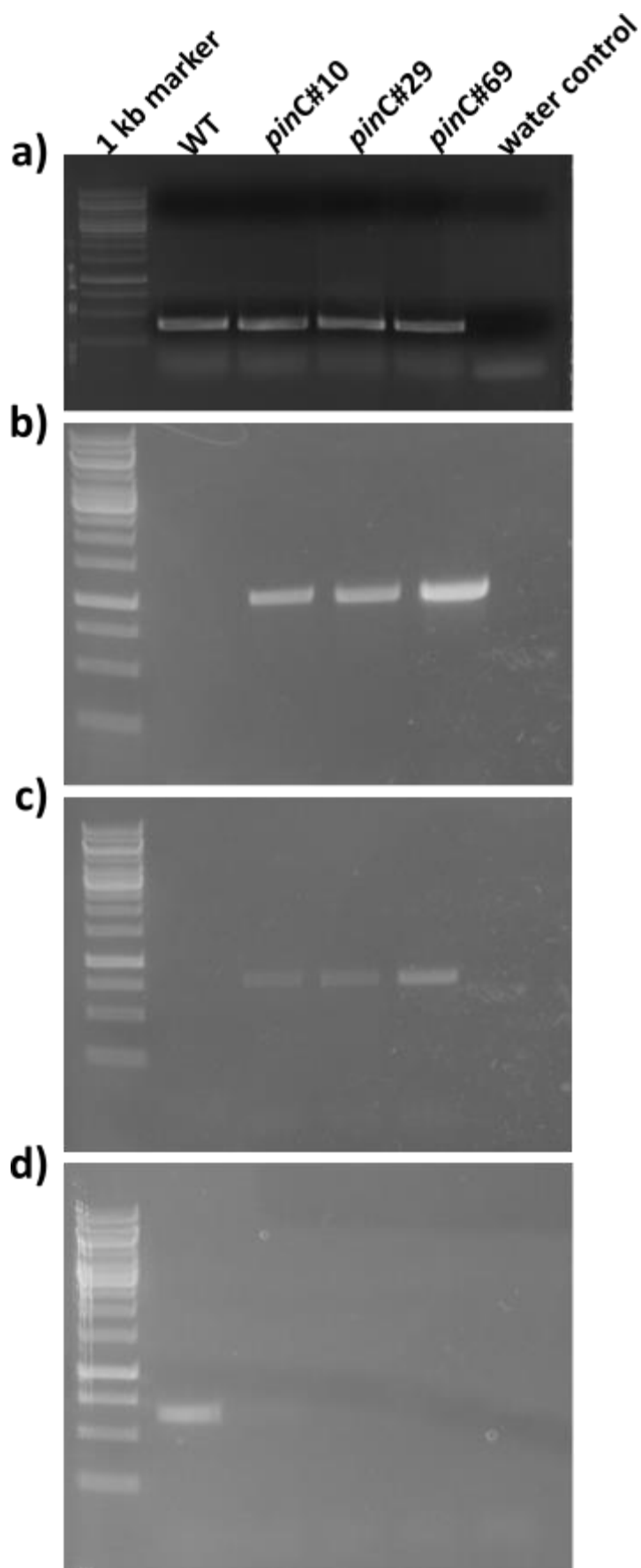
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1331

1332

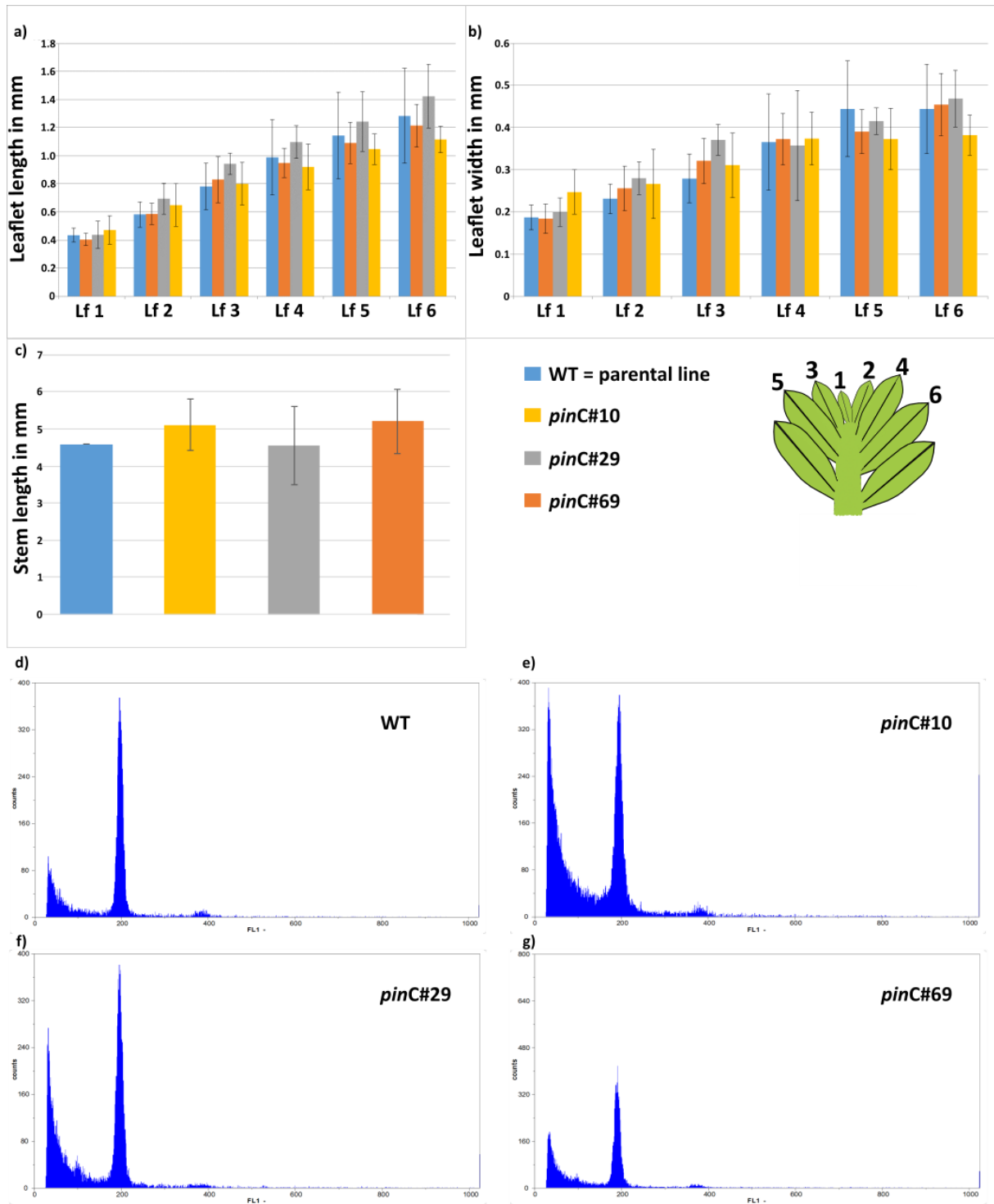
1333 **Supplemental Figure S4: Molecular evaluation of *pinCPromCit*.** a) Fluorescent microscopy
 1334 pictures of CA#2, parental line of *pinCPromCit* (left) and *Physcomitrella* WT (right) protonema
 1335 and budding gametophore, scale bar = 100 μ m. b) Control PCR using constitutive expressed
 1336 gene *Efl α* for *pinCPromCit* and CA#2, 3' integration (PCR product = 1.4 kb) and 5' integration
 1337 (PCR product = 1.5 kb) of *PpPINC* promoter construct, no PCR product for CA#2 parental line.
 1338 c) Construct used for creating *pinCPromCit* by targeting the whole construct used in
 1339 Wiedemann *et al.* (2018). BSD = selection marker, prom = promoter, term = terminator.



1340

1341

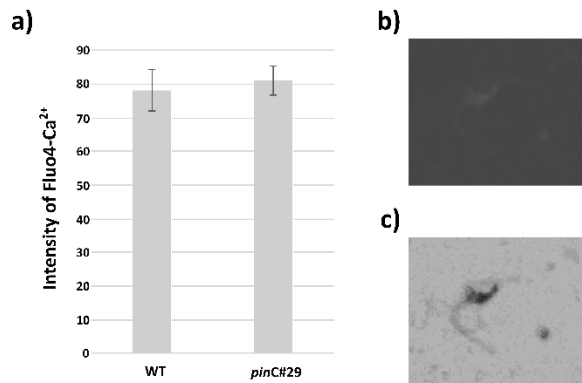
1342 **Supplemental Figure 5: Molecular analysis of *Physcomitrella pinC* mutant lines.** a)
1343 Control PCR using the L21 gene (C45 primers). b) 5' integration of targeting construct (1 kb).
1344 c) 3' integration of targeting construct (770 bp). d) RT-PCR amplifying a region from exon 3
1345 to exon 5 (700 bp).



1346

1347

1348 **Supplemental Figure 6: Phenotypal characterization of vegetative tissue for**
 1349 **Physcomitrella wild type (WT) and *pinC* mutant lines.** a) Length and b) width of the first
 1350 first six leaves of a gametophore. c) stem length d)-g) flow cytometric measurements confirmed
 1351 haploidy of the generated *pinC* knockouts. Number of measured leaves and stems a) + b) n = 7;
 1352 c) WT: n = 13, *pinC#10*: n = 14, *pinC#29*: n = 16, *pinC#69*: n = 18.

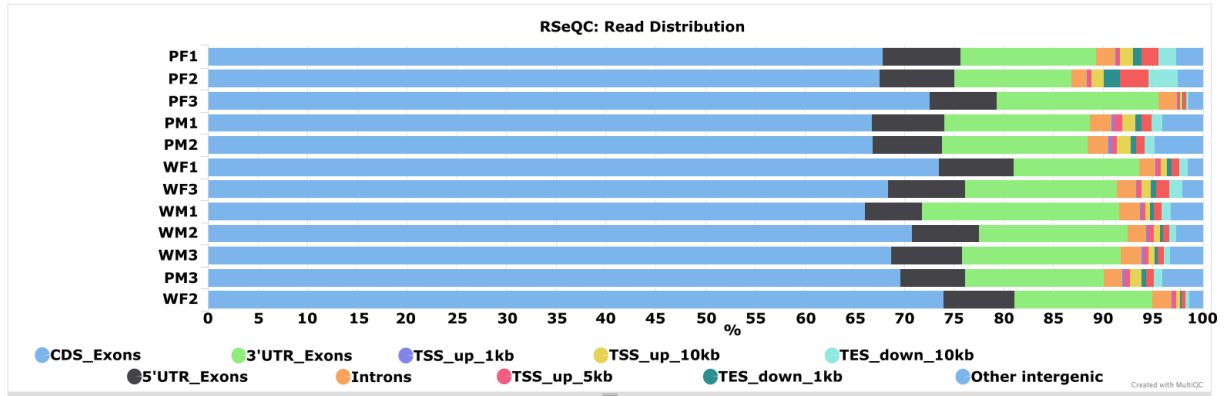


1353

1354

1355 **Supplemental Figure S7: Calcium concentration in Physcomitrella spermatozooids.** No
1356 difference in Ca²⁺ concentration in Physcomitrella WT and mutant sperm cells. a) Intensity of
1357 single sperm cells after treatment with Fluo-4. b) grey scale picture of fluorescence image of
1358 sperm cell treated with Fluo-4. c) negative image of b) to show sperm cell with flagellum. For
1359 a) n = 15 spermatozooids from three different antheridia were examined.

1360



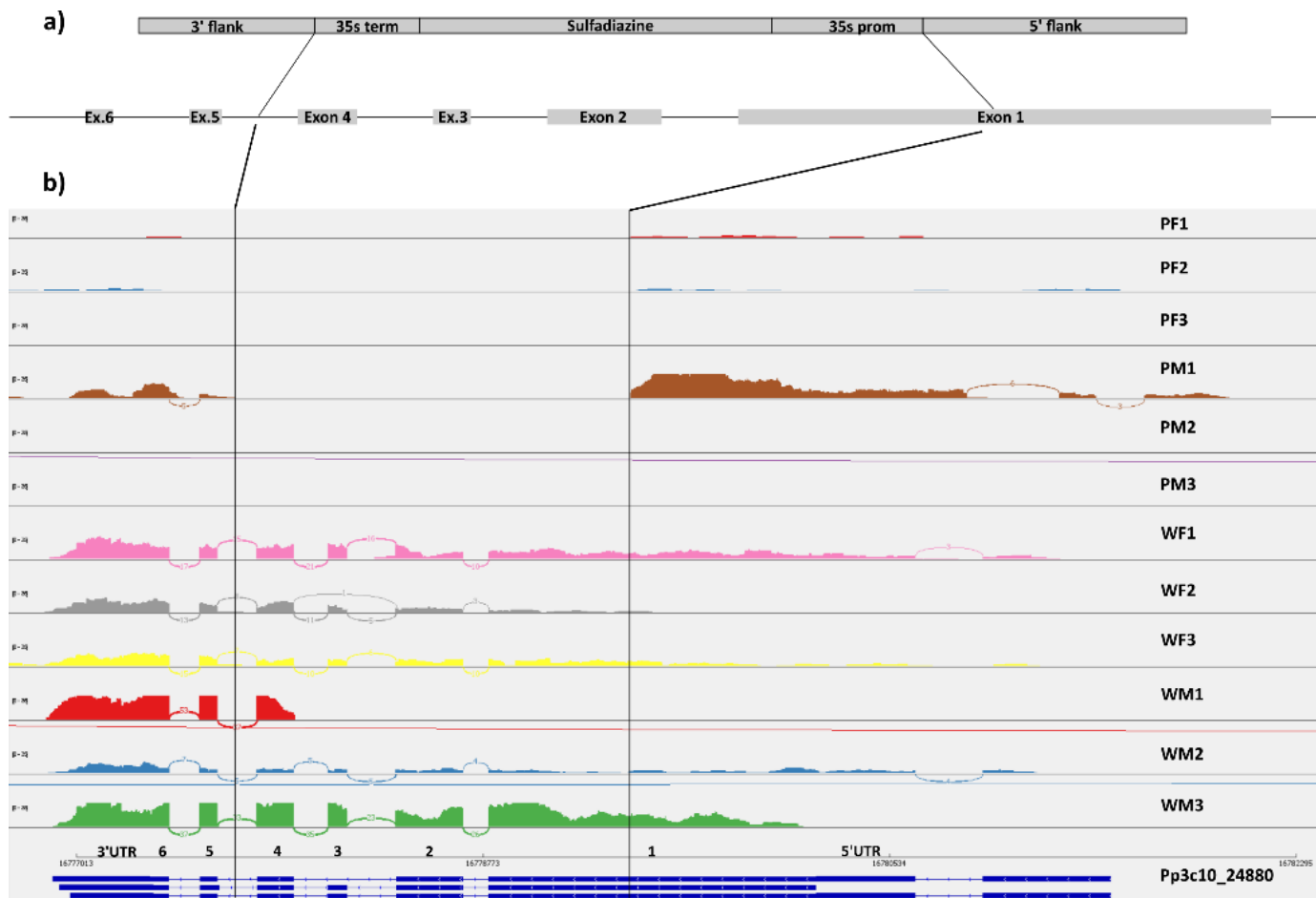
1361

	% Assigned	M Assigned
PF1	47.7%	19.0
PF2	49.5%	25.6
PF3	69.8%	30.9
PM1	54.3%	22.9
PM2	60.1%	25.5
PM3	57.1%	39.8
WF1	61.2%	20.7
WF2	65.7%	30.3
WF3	56.9%	25.0
WM1	57.2%	21.9
WM2	61.5%	25.9
WM3	65.0%	26.3

1362

1363 **Supplemental Figure S8: Quality control RNAseq.** Read distribution in *Physcomitrella* WT
 1364 and *pinC* mutant gametangia, WM = WT antheridia, WF = WT archegonia, PM = *pinC*#29
 1365 antheridia, PF = *pinC*#29 archegonia. CDS = coding sequence, UTR = untranslated region, TSS
 1366 = transcription start sequence, TES = transcription end sequence. Quality control done with
 1367 MultiQC (Galaxy Version 1.11+galaxy0).

1368

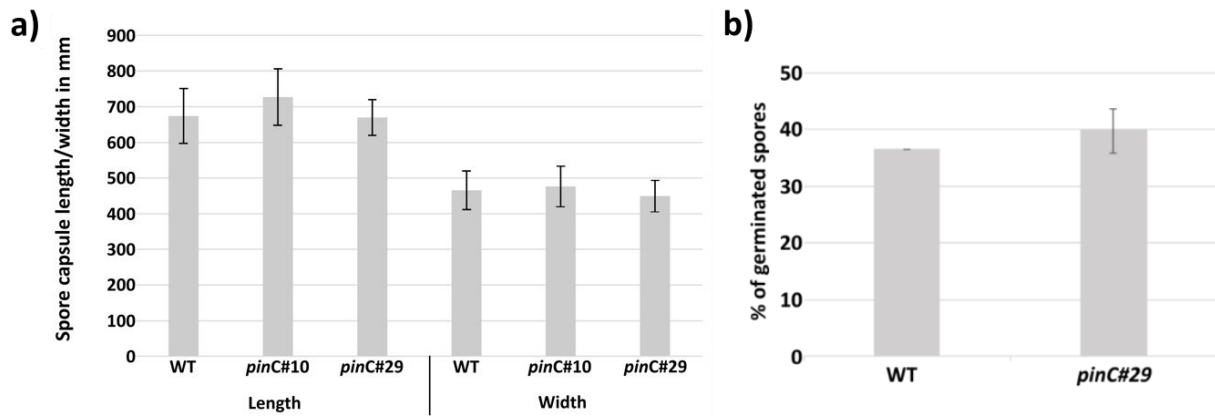


1369

1370

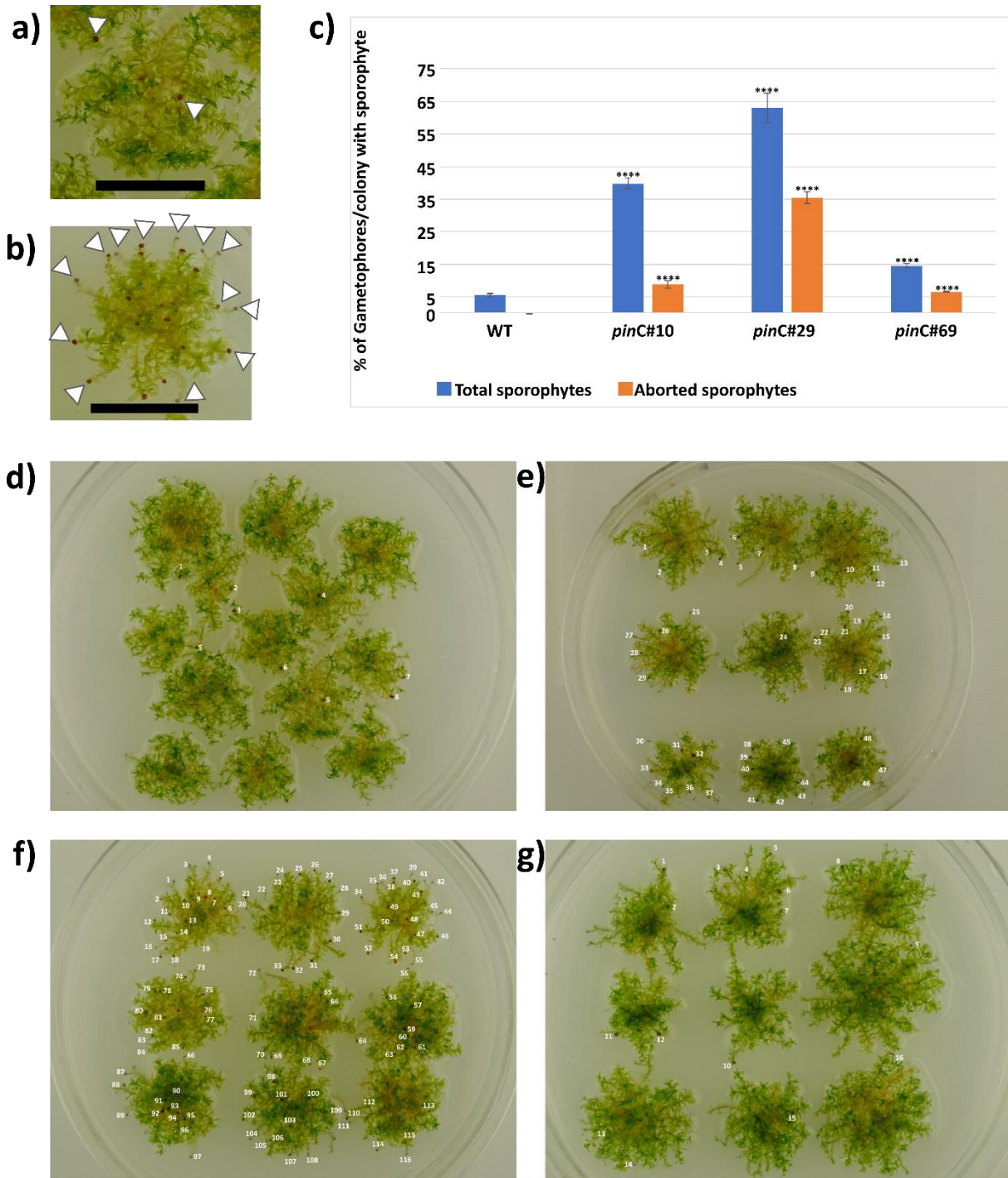
1371 **Supplemental Figure S9: Proof of *PpPINC* mutation in *pinC#29*.** Sashimi plot showing
1372 integration of knockout construct in *Physcomitrella* WT background. a) Knockout construct for
1373 the *PINC* gene. Black lines indicate the integration into the gene starting from the middle of
1374 exon 1 to the intron between exon 4 and 5. b) Sashimi plot for the *PINC* gene in all samples.
1375 Continuous read through of mapped fragments only in WT samples, confirming knockout of
1376 the gene in the mutant.

1377



1378

1379 **Supplemental Figure S10: Size of spore capsules and spore germination rate.** a) Length
1380 and width of mature spore capsules from *Physcomitrella* WT n = 15, mutant *pinC#10* and
1381 mutant #29, n = 16. b) Germination rate of spores three days after plating. n = 3 plates.



1382

1383

1384 **Supplemental Figure S11: Spore capsule numbers.** Physcomitrella spore capsules in a) WT
 1385 and b) *pinC#29* mutant, white arrows mark sporophytes (for visibility reasons, not all
 1386 sporophytes in b) are marked while all visible sporophytes are marked in a)). bar = 1cm. c)
 1387 Percentage of gametophores with a sporophyte per colony, in blue total number of sporophytes
 1388 (adult + aborted), in orange are only aborted sporophytes. Asterisks = p < 0.00005 of mutant
 1389 lines against wild type, n (colonies) = WT (41), *pinC#10* (30), *pinC#29* (42), *pinC#69* (32) d)
 1390 wild type plate with 9 sporophytes counted. e) *pinC#10* plate with 48 sporophytes. f) *pinC#29*
 1391 plate with 116 sporophytes. g) *pinC#69* with 16 sporophytes.

1392

1393 **Supplemental Table 1:** Primers used in *Physcomitrella* WT and mutant lines.

Name	Sequence	Comment
P3-KO Fw	5'-GGGATCCATGTTGGCCTACGCGTCTGT-3'	Amplified region for <i>pinC</i> knockout construct
P3-KO Rv	5'-GAAGCTTCTGGGGAGTTCAACACCATT-3'	
5PinCprom_f+CA5	5'- agcttaacgtagccactcTCCTTTGTGTGGAGTAGAG-3'	Gibson primers for amplification of PpPINC promoter region, (capital letters)
3PinCprom_r+Citrin	5'- CACGTCGACAGATCGTCAAGgcagaagttcatgggaggtgga- 3'	
Pin3f_ex1-2	5'-ACGTGAACATTTCCTCGGTTC-3'	RT-PCR, middle of exon 1 to exon 2 of PpPINC
Pin3r_ex2	5'-GTTCGGATTGCGAGTGAGTT-3'	
C45_fwd	5'-GGCTGGTCATGGGTTGCG-3'	cDNA reference gene
C45_rev	5'-GAGGTCAACTGTCTCGCC-3'	
35SPqPCR_f	5'-CCATTGCCAGCTATCTGTC-3'	Determination of transgene <i>pinC</i> copy number via qPCR
35SPqPCR_r	5'-CATTGCGATAAAGGAAAGGC-3'	

1394

1395 **Supplemental Table 2: Differentially expressed genes in Physcomitrella WT and mutant.**
 1396 Single genes found in comparisons of Physcomitrella a) mutant (PM) vs wildtype (WM)
 1397 antheridia b) mutant (PF) vs wild type (WF) archegonia; BP = biological process, CC = cellular
 1398 compartment, MF = molecular function.

1399 a)

Upregulated genes mutant (PM) vs. wildtype (WM) antheridia					
geneID	Foldchange	p-Adjust	GO_annot_BP	GO_annot_MF	GO_annot_CC
Pp3c26_6020	2,61799094	0,00574099	single-multicellular organism process; anatomical structure development; ion transmembrane transport; single-organism developmental process	ion channel activity	cell part; integral component of membrane
Pp3c26_3990	2,60429982	3,58E-08	transmembrane transport	substrate-specific transmembrane transporter activity	chloroplast envelope; integral component of membrane

1400

geneID	PM1	PM2	PM3	WM1	WM2	WM3
Pp3c26_6020	209	282	1259	15	50	32
Pp3c26_3990	676	735	822	79	101	101

1401

1402

Downregulated genes mutant (PM) vs. wildtype (WM) antheridia					
geneID	Foldchange	p-Adjust	GO_annot_BP	GO_annot_MF	GO_annot_CC
Pp3c9_8920	-2,14177862	0,00160142	dolichol biosynthetic process	amino acid binding	chloroplast stroma; chloroplast thylakoid membrane
Pp3c14_8940	-2,3368623	0,01313347	.	.	integral component of membrane
Pp3c20_22670	-2,48823907	0,00673352	positive regulation of transcription, DNA-templated	zinc ion binding; sequence-specific DNA binding; sequence-specific DNA binding transcription factor activity	nucleus
Pp3c1_22810	-2,68377153	0,00973054	cell wall modification:pectin catabolic process	pectinesterase activity:aspartyl esterase activity	cell wall:extracellular region
Pp3c19_15670	-2,68772125	0,00973054	cellular component organization or biogenesis; cellular process	.	cytoplasm

Pp3c3_4950	-2,71566077	0,009008	regulation of biological quality; regulation of transcription, DNA-templated; asymmetric cell division; leaf development; radial pattern formation	sequence-specific DNA binding; sequence-specific DNA binding transcription factor activity	nucleus
Pp3c3_11110	-3,07745056	4,01E-08	proteolysis	aspartic-type endopeptidase activity	.
Pp3c21_8410	-3,24497467	5,52E-05	peptidyl-tyrosine dephosphorylation	protein tyrosine phosphatase activity	.
Pp3c12_11710	-4,86650335	1,63E-14	.	.	.

1403

geneID	PM1	PM2	PM3	WM1	WM2	WM3
Pp3c9_8920	1079	1248	2115	10980	5147	6717
Pp3c14_8940	531	119	190	1918	3043	2972
Pp3c20_22670	36	8	48	286	383	271
Pp3c3_11110	170	141	99	1975	1576	1902
Pp3c21_8410	1	5	7	100	197	253
Pp3c12_11710	232	115	230	71101	8547	41718
Pp3c1_22810	1	0	0	184	76	86
Pp3c19_15670	1	0	2	123	90	54
Pp3c3_4950	2	0	0	231	161	82

1404

1405 **b)**

Upregulated genes mutant (PF) archegonia vs. wildtype (WF) archegonia					
geneID	Foldchange	p-Adjust	GO_annot_BP	GO_annot_MF	GO_annot_CC
Pp3c11_4360	3,28704921	5,88E-11	proteolysis	serine-type endopeptidase activity	cell part

1406

geneID	PF1	PF2	PF3	WF1	WF2	WF3
Pp3c11_4360	154	241	220	0	0	4

1407

Downregulated genes mutant (PF) archegonia vs. wildtype (WF) archegonia					
geneID	Foldchange	p-Adjust	GO_annot_BP	GO_annot_MF	GO_annot_CC
Pp3c7_8820	-2,55854236	6,08E-07	.	.	.
Pp3c6_26100	-6,49563884	9,91E-73	.	metal ion binding	.

1408

geneID	PF1	PF2	PF3	WF1	WF2	WF3
Pp3c7_8820	72	129	58	1134	1082	3960
Pp3c6_26100	0	0	0	989	1581	1305

1409