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2 **A CHARCOALIFIED OVULE ADAPTED FOR WIND DISPERSAL AND**

3 **DETECTING HERBIVORY FROM THE LATE VISÉAN**

4 **(CARBONIFEROUS) OF SCOTLAND**

5

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16 *Premise of research.* Mississippian (Lower Carboniferous) anatomically

17 preserved ovules are pivotal to our present understanding of the Paleozoic

18 primary seed plant radiation, but few are known from the late Viséan

19 stratigraphic interval approximately 330 million years ago. Here we document

20 an exceptionally well-preserved, mesoscopic charcoaled ovule from late

21 Viséan limestones that is potentially adapted for wind dispersal and deterring

22 herbivory.

23 *Methodology.* We use Synchrotron Radiation X-ray Tomographic Microscopy
24 (SRXTM) and Low Vacuum Scanning Electron Microscopy (LVSEM) to analyse
25 histological features not identifiable through traditional methods.

26 *Pivotal results.* The ovule is small, 2mm long and 1.25 mm in maximum diameter,
27 and has a dense covering of spirally arranged, long, slender, hollow hairs with
28 glandular apices and a distal papilla. The nucellus is fused to the integument up
29 to the nucellar apex and above this the integument comprises eight apical lobes,
30 each with a single vascular bundle. The nucellar apex has a domed pollen
31 chamber and large central column characteristic of hydrasperman-type
32 (lagenostomalean) pteridosperms, but lacks the distal salpinx seen in most
33 hydrasperman ovules, leaving an exposed distal opening to the pollen chamber
34 for pollination. Differences with existing taxa lead to the erection of
35 *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen. et sp. nov.

36 *Conclusions.* The apical glands presumably functioned as granivory deterrents;
37 coprolites (fossil faeces) from herbivorous arthropods are abundant in the
38 fossiliferous horizon and at this stratigraphic interval. The small ovule size and
39 its dense covering of hairs infers *Hirsutisperma* was adapted for wind dispersal
40 and was an R-selected species, producing large numbers of small offspring in
41 unstable or changing environments. Taphonomic implications are discussed
42 including preservational biases for charcoalification. *Hirsutisperma* provides the

43 first clear evidence for ecological niche partitioning in Mississippian
44 hydrasperman-type ovules.

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47 *Keywords:* Gymnosperm, seed, hydrasperman reproduction, hairs, herbivory,
48 plant:animal relationships, seed ecology, taphonomy, wildfire.

49

50 *Online enhancements:* video of 3D rotating reconstruction in .avi, .mp4 and .mov
51 formats

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53

Introduction

54 The Paleozoic origin and primary radiation of seed plants represents a key
55 event in Earth history and terrestrialization, leading to the colonisation of drier and/or
56 upland (extrabasinal) habitats uninhabitable by free-sporing plants (e.g., Bateman and
57 DiMichele 1994; Bateman et al. 1998) as well as forming diverse communities in
58 Carboniferous wetlands. First appearing in the fossil record in the late Devonian
59 (Rothwell et al. 1989; Prestianni et al. 2014), seed plants underwent a rapid adaptive
60 radiation in which they diversified to become dominant in many Carboniferous and
61 stratigraphically younger floras. Particularly important to our present understanding
62 of early seed plants are the Tournaisian-Viséan (Mississippian) anatomically
63 preserved floras of Southern Scotland (see Scott et al. 1984, 1986; Galtier and
64 Meyer-Berthaud 2006; Bateman et al. 2016) that include a spectacular range of fossil

65 species often with exceptional levels of anatomical preservation. Foremost of these
66 are the remarkably diverse ovules extensively documented by the pioneering work of
67 A. G. Long (1915–1999) (e.g. Long 1960a, b). However, most of these ovules are
68 from the Tournaisian to the middle of the Viséan stages; remarkably few are known
69 from the Late Viséan with only *Sphaerostoma ovale* (Benson 1914) and *Physostoma*
70 sp. known from this stratigraphic interval in the Pettycur locality in Fife (Scott et al.
71 1984). Here we provide a detailed systematic account of an exceptionally well-
72 preserved late Viséan ovule from the Kingswood locality near Pettycur (Scott et al.
73 1986; Meyer-Berthaud and Galtier 1986) preserved as a mesoscopic charcoal
74 (Glasspool and Scott 2013). The fossil is unusual in its morphology, being
75 significantly smaller than contemporaneous species, and in having a dense covering
76 of fine, long, integumentary hairs with glandular apices and an exposed nucellar
77 apex. It was briefly illustrated and had a summary description presented by Scott et
78 al. (2009) in a techniques paper that used it to introduce the combination of Low
79 Vacuum Scanning Electron Microscopy (LVSEM) and Synchrotron Radiation X-Ray
80 Tomographic Microscopy (SRXTM), but a full systematic investigation was not
81 undertaken at that time. We describe and illustrate the fossil in detail for the first
82 time, then compare it to other Paleozoic ovule taxa and in doing so establish a new
83 genus and species based on its unique features. We also consider the evolutionary,
84 ecological and taphonomic implications of the new ovule.

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Geological setting

87 On the southern coast of Fife in southern Scotland, the area around Pettycur
88 exposes the Kinghorn Volcanic Formation (Gordon, 1914; Allan 1924; Monaghan
89 and Browne 2010) of mid-late Viséan age (Mississippian, Carboniferous; Monaghan
90 and Parrish 2006; Monaghan and Browne 2010; Bateman et al. 2016). These rocks
91 outcrop in cliff sections at Pettycur and at Kingswood End to the west, as well as in
92 the intervening Pettycur Caravan site (Rex and Scott 1987). The nearby Pettycur
93 Limestone flora has been described in numerous publications (Scott et al. 1984; Rex
94 and Scott 1987; Neregato and Hilton 2019). Palynological dating of the Kinghorn
95 Volcanic Formation has indicated that it belongs to the NM and VF miospore zones
96 (Brindley and Spinner, 1989) of mid to late Asbian to early Brigantian regional sub-
97 stages of the Viséan Stage (Monaghan and Pringle 2004) with absolute ages between
98 329 and 335 ma (Monaghan and Pringle 2004; Monaghan and Browne 2010). The
99 succession at Kingswood End (NS 265 864) comprises a sequence of basalt lavas,
100 dolerite sills, ashes, limestones and coaly shales and is cut by a small agglomerate-
101 filled vent (Rex and Scott 1987). Outcrops just to the east in the Pettycur caravan site
102 expose a 6m sequence of agglomerates and ashes, which at the top contain beds and
103 lenses of limestones (the Kingswood Limestone) that show evidence of slumping.
104 Limestones of Bed 9 in this succession at locality 1 of Scott et al. (1986) contain the
105 charcoalfied ovule described herein together with bands of abundant charcoal and
106 calcareous permineralizations (Meyer-Berthaud 1986, 1990; Meyer-Berthaud and
107 Galtier 1986; Scott et al. 1986; Scott 1990a). An additional outcrop (2) of ashes with

108 bedded Kingswood Limestone was later exposed in the upper part of the Caravan Site
109 (Scott, 1990b).

110 Palynological data from outcrop 1 (see Scott et al. 1986) of the Kingswood
111 Limestone yielded a rich palynoflora that were consistent with the NM Zone (DP
112 subzone) that is of mid-late Asbian age (Mid/late Viséan). This date is in line with the
113 broader biostratigraphic review undertaken by Brindley and Spinner (1989).

114

115 **Materials and methods**

116 More than 80 limestone blocks were collected from the original outcrop 1 at
117 Kingswood (Scott et al. 1986). Blocks were sliced into 1 cm thick slabs and from
118 each surface one reference peel was made (Galtier and Phillips 1999), etching
119 surfaces with 10% hydrochloric acid. Selected peels were mounted on glass slides for
120 microscopic examination and photography. Petrographic thin sections, some stained
121 with potassium ferricyanide and Alizarine red-S carbonate stain were prepared of the
122 limestones and some of the lavas. In addition, polished thin sections of selected areas
123 were made to provide data on the permineralization process and on the preservation
124 of the plants. In this study, selected slabs of block KIN957 were dissolved in dilute
125 20% hydrochloric acid. Residues were then sieved using a 180 µm polypropylene
126 sieve. The charcoal residue was further treated with 40% hydrofluoric acid, to
127 remove silica, and neutralized. The cleaned residue was stored in distilled water and
128 sorted in water using a binocular microscope with incident lighting. Specimens were
129 separated using 000 hair brushes and mounted into dry cavity slides (see Pearson and

130 Scott 1999 for techniques). The ovule described herein was picked from residues
131 from dissolving Block 957I. The dry specimen was mounted on a 3 mm diameter
132 brass pin using colloidal carbon in isopropanol.

133 The specimen was first analysed under Low Vacuum Scanning Electron
134 Microscopy (LVSEM) uncoated using a Hitachi S3000N variable pressure SEM at
135 Royal Holloway University of London (by ACS, under low vacuum and in
136 backscatter electron mode (see Scott et al. 2009 for details).

137 Following LVSEM analysis, the specimen was investigated using Synchrotron
138 Radiation X-Ray Tomographic Microscopy (SRXTM) in 2006 at the Tomography
139 Station of the Materials Sciences beam line (predecessor of the TOMCAT beam line,
140 Stampanoni et al. 2006) of the Swiss Light Source, Paul Scherrer Institut,
141 Switzerland (Stampanoni et al. 2002) as outlined by Scott et al. (2009). The ovule
142 was too large to fit on a single scan so the chalazal and apical regions were scanned
143 separately. In 2009 the data was analysed in Avizo version 5.0 (Mercury Computer
144 Systems Ltd, Chelmsford, MA, USA), but at that time the authors mistakenly thought
145 they only had an incomplete image stack when producing Figures 5 and 6 in Scott et
146 al. (2009). In 2018, the original SRXTM data was re-analysed in detail, with
147 individual images adjusted in ImageJ (<https://imagej.nih.gov/ij/>), using FIJI
148 (<https://imagej.net/Fiji>) for bulk image brightness/contrast editing and to run a
149 despeckle pass to reduce noise. Data was analysed and manipulated using AVIZO
150 version 9.1 and the ovule reconstructed using Drishti (ver. 2.6.4;
151 <https://sf.anu.edu.au/Vizlab/drishti/index.shtml>). Software improvements since the

152 earlier analyses enabled recognition of additional anatomical features within the
153 datasets.

154 After SRXTM analysis, the specimen became fragmented during transportation
155 due to its brittle nature. The remaining fragments were mounted on an SEM stub
156 using a carbon filter pad and analysed on a Thermofisher Phemon ProX SEM at
157 Birmingham Electron Analytical Microscope (BEAM) facility (University of
158 Birmingham). The specimen was uncoated and investigated at 15 kV, using two back
159 scatter detectors. The resultant digital SEM images were edited (cropped, brightness,
160 contrast, intensity and levels adjusted) in GIMP (ver. 2.8.16; <http://www.gimp.org>).
161 All figures were constructed in Inkscape (ver. 0.92; <https://inkscape.org>).

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Results

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165 *Hirsutisperma gen. nov. J. Hilton, J. Galtier and A.C.Scott*

166

167 *Generic diagnosis.* Very small hydrasperman ovule, radially symmetrical and
168 conical. Integument and nucellus adnate except at the apex where the nucellus forms
169 the pollen chamber. Cylindrical pedicel progressively enlarging into the integument,
170 showing longitudinal lobes. Above the plinth, integument lobes free, each containing
171 a single vascular strand. Entire integumentary outer surface, including free distal
172 lobes, densely covered by long multicellular hairs intertwined and spirally arranged.
173 At nucellar apex, a wide domed pollen chamber with walls constituted of large cells

174 with thickened walls, ranging to smaller cells surrounding a central opening. Pollen
175 chamber floor of small cells with a conical central column.

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177 *Etymology.* The generic name emphasizes the very distinctive hair-covering of this
178 ovule which is interpreted as being of special adaptive significance.

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180 *Species* – *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* sp. nov. *J. Hilton, J. Galtier and A.C.Scott*

181

182 *Specific diagnosis.* Conical ovule 2 mm long, up to 1.25 mm wide immediately above
183 pollen chamber. Base of ovule 270 μm diameter, gradually widens in basal 2/3 of
184 ovule length 800–900 μm wide, reaching up to 1.20 mm below plinth. Integument
185 thickness 180–220 μm ; 8 free integument lobes, 330 μm maximum diameter. Hairs at
186 least 0.5 mm long, 10–20 μm in diameter. Glandular tips 35–45 μm long and 20–25
187 μm wide. Nucellus cavity obconical, up to 1400 μm maximum length and 625 μm
188 maximum width, containing only fragments of megaspore wall. Pollen chamber
189 dome-shaped, up to 400 μm wide and 200 μm high. Cells of the pollen chamber wall
190 rectangular, 20–25 μm in diameter and 60–80 μm long. Central column up to 240 μm
191 wide and 160 μm high, made of small thin-walled cells, 15–20 μm wide and 40–60
192 μm high. Single vascular strand enters ovule at chalaza and divides below nucellus
193 into 8 bundles, one in each integumentary lobe. Integumentary bundles 20–30 μm
194 wide, composed of small tracheids 4–8 μm in diameter.

195

196 *Etymology.* The specific epithet is in honour of Gar W. Rothwell for his pioneering
197 studies on the reproductive biology of Paleozoic ovules and for his seminal work
198 piecing together the ontogeny and functional morphology of hydrasperman-type
199 ovules.

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201 *Locality.* Kingswood, Fife, Scotland (UK National Grid Reference NS 265 864).

202

203 *Horizon.* Kingswood Limestone, Kinghorn Volcanic Formation.

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205 *Stratigraphic age.* DP subzone of the NM miospore Zone; mid-late Asbian British
206 regional substage, corresponding to the middle to late Viséan Global Stage
207 (Mississippian, Carboniferous).

208

209 *Holotype.* V 68764 (figs 1-7).

210

211 *Depository.* Palaeontological collections, Natural History Museum, London.

212

213 *Remarks.* The new genus is distinguished from all other hydrasperman-type ovules by
214 its small size and dense covering of hollow, spirally arranged hairs with apical glands
215 with papillae. Remaining parts of the holotype are mounted on an SEM stub (see
216 Materials and Methods).

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Description

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Gross morphology

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The following description is based on a single ovule with exceptional

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preservation that is 2 mm long and has a maximum diameter of 1.25 mm (fig. 1*a*).

223

The ovule has a dense covering of thin, spirally arranged, hairs that envelope the

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outer body of the integument and give the ovule an asymmetrical appearance (fig. 1*a*,

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1*b*). Apically, the integument comprises eight terete integumentary lobes that

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surround an exposed nucellar apex (fig. 1*c*). The nucellar apex comprises a pollen

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chamber with a large apical opening and within it occurs a central column (fig. 1*c*,

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1*d*). In contrast to the asymmetrical hairs on the exterior of the integument, the inner

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parts of the integument including the free lobes and also the nucellar apex show the

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ovule is radially symmetrical in transverse section (fig. 1*c*). The shape, organisation

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and tissue compositions of the ovule are best characterized from analysis of the three-

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dimensional SRXTM dataset in longitudinal (fig. 2) and transverse (fig. 3) sections.

233

Longitudinal sections show the integument is conical, widening gradually in the basal

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2/3 of the ovules length before gradually narrowing (figs. 2*a*, 2*b*). Longitudinal

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paradermal sections show the organisation of the integument protruding beyond the

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apex of the nucellus (fig 2*c*, 2*d*). In transverse sections, the integument is entire in the

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basal c. 50% of the ovule where it gradually widens below the level of the nucellus

238

and the structure of the integument (fig. 3*a*, 3*b*). Integumentary lobes develop distally

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from the chalaza (fig. 3*c-i*) and remain attached to the nucellus for some of their

240 length (fig. 3*c–d*), but become free from the nucellus apically (fig 3*e–h*). The nucellar
241 apex is exposed between the projecting integumentary lobes (fig. 3*e–h*) with the
242 lobes extending beyond the end of the nucellus (fig. 3*i*) but are taphonomically
243 incomplete with irregular distal margins.

244

245 *Integument*

246 The most distinctive feature of the integument is the dense covering of long,
247 slender, filamentous hairs on the outside of the integument (fig 1*a*, 1*b*). These
248 originate from the outer epidermis from vertically elongated, rectangular cells that are
249 approximately 50 μm long and 20 μm wide (fig. 4*a–d*). Individual hairs are at least
250 500 μm long (fig. 1*a*; fig. 4*d*, 4*f*) and where complete have swollen, glandular
251 terminations often with a small apical papillae and spiralled rectangular cells (fig. 4*e–*
252 *g*). Hairs are approximately 10–20 μm thick (fig. 4*f–h*), with those at the base of the
253 ovule typically more slender than those positioned apically (fig 1*a*, 1*b*). The hairs
254 appear to be multicellular, evidenced by broken hairs having internal wall divisions
255 (fig. 4*h*) from very oblique wall endings. Hairs arise in bundles and twist around each
256 other (fig. 4*i*), and tend to have a dominant vertical trend in their orientation when
257 viewed in in longitudinal sections (fig. 1*a*; fig. 4*a*). However, when viewed in
258 transverse section a spiralled arrangement of the hairs is dominant, best seen in the
259 SRXTM dataset (fig. 5*a–c*) and especially in the SRXCT virtual transverse sections
260 (fig. 6*c–d*). At the base of the ovule where lobes are absent (fig. 1*a*), hairs appear to
261 be uniformly distributed judging from SEM images (fig. 1*a*, 1*b*; fig. 4*a–c*) and in

262 transverse sections from the SRXCT data (fig 5a, 5b). Where hairs are absent at the
263 base of the ovule it is most likely due to taphonomic loss as broken hair bases or gaps
264 in the epidermal cells where individual hairs originate are clearly visible (fig. 4a). By
265 contrast, where the integument is lobate, hairs are distributed on the external faces of
266 the integumentary lobes only (fig. 5d, 5e), with no hairs occurring in the zone
267 between adjacent lobes where they are starting to separate from each other. Hairs
268 arise in bunches (fig. 4i; fig. 5d–f) and intertwine with one another (fig. 4i).

269 The integument is differentiated into distinct tissue zones with a uniseriate
270 external epidermis (fig. 4a–d; 5a–e) of rectangular cells, 3.5–5 μm thick, and zones
271 of thick-walled and thin-walled cells apparent inside the epidermis. Immediately
272 within the external epidermis is a thin zone, 10–15 μm thick comprising 2–3 rows of
273 small, thick-walled cells (fig. 5d–f) that appear to represent sclerotesta. Individual
274 sclerotesta cells are 4–6 μm in transverse direction and are 6–8 μm wide, with thick
275 cell walls that the scanned data (fig.7c) do not allow us to characterise further. On the
276 inner surface of this zone occurs larger, irregularly spaced cells (fig. 5 e, 5f), typically
277 20–40 μm in diameter with thin walls that appear to be parenchymatous and represent
278 endotesta. Vascular bundles are situated in the centre of each integumentary lobe and
279 are surrounded by large, thin-walled cells which in some sections appear to be
280 radially organised (fig. 5f) or often decayed (fig.7c), but in others are less clear and
281 the entire lobe appears to be bilaterally symmetrical (fig. 5h). In paradermal views
282 through the integument (fig. 2d) the thick-walled cells on the exterior of the
283 integument are longitudinally elongated, 40–60 μm long.

284 In the previous report of the Kingswood ovule, Scott et al. (2009) considered
285 the inner surface of the integument to have a covering of fine hairs. Here we
286 reinterpret these features (fig. 7a, 7b) as either decayed tissues of the integument or
287 microbial filaments draped over the tissues of the integument.

288

289 *Nucellus, nucellar apex and megaspore*

290 The nucellus is thin and fused to the integument for the bottom half of the
291 ovule, becoming free from the integument where the lobes start to separate from one
292 another. At this level the nucellus and integument are only conjoined at the inner
293 most parts of the lobes (i in fig. 3d and fig. 5f). The nucellar apex comprises a plinth
294 at which level the nucellus narrows below the pollen chamber (fig. 2b; fig. 3e; fig.
295 5g). The pollen chamber forms a wide dome 280 μm wide at its base, widening to
296 400 μm apically, and up to 200 μm high. It comprises rectangular, thick-walled cells
297 that are readily distinguished from the SRXTM dataset (fig. 2b, 2c; fig. 5i–l), ranging
298 from 20–25 μm wide and 60–80 μm high. Cells of the nucellus get smaller towards
299 the apical opening and bend inwards into the centre of the pollen chamber when
300 viewed from above (fig. 1c, 1d; fig. 5l) or in longitudinal section (fig. 2b; fig. 6h) and
301 the pollen chamber opening appears to have a complete margin. The pollen chamber
302 lacks a distal, tubular salpinx emanating from the roof of the pollen chamber, with the
303 apical opening of the pollen chamber being 95–110 μm in diameter. Centrally within
304 the pollen chamber occurs a large central column comprising small, variably sized
305 polygonal cells, thin-walled cells (fig. 2b; fig. 5i–l) elongated longitudinally that

306 appear to be parenchymatous. The conical central column has a concave base, with a
307 maximum diameter of 240 μm and is up to 160 μm high (fig. 2*b*; fig. 5*i*). The apex of
308 the central column sits immediately below the pollen chamber opening, leaving a 20–
309 70 μm wide gap for pollen to enter. Pollen has not been identified in the nucellar
310 apex. The megaspore membrane is in most places adnate the nucellus but in some
311 places has separated from it (fig. 3*d*; fig. 5*c*, 5*e*). The megaspore wall is extremely
312 thin and impossible to measure from the SRXTM dataset. Tissues of the
313 megagametophyte are absent.

314

315

Vascularization

316 A single vascular strand enters the ovule centrally at the chalaza (fig. 2*a*; fig.
317 3*a*; fig. 5*a*) and divides below the nucellus (fig. 3*b*; fig. 5*b*) into eight, radially
318 organised integumentary bundles, with each bundle corresponding to the position of a
319 single integumentary lobe. Integumentary bundles extend to the end of the preserved
320 length of the lobes (fig. 1*c*; fig. 5*e*; fig. 7*c*, 7*d*), but as the lobes are in each case
321 incomplete, their full length like the length of the integumentary lobes themselves is
322 unknown. At the apex of the integument, integumentary lobe bundles are terete,
323 approximately 20–30 μm wide in transverse section, comprising 15–25 hexagonal
324 tracheids varying in size from 4–8 μm wide (fig. 7*c*, 7*d*). The smallest (?protoxylem)
325 tracheids are abaxially mesarch. In longitudinal section (fig. 7*d*); tracheids are
326 approximately 2–4 μm wide with scalariform pitting.

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Discussion

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Taphonomy

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The Kingswood Limestone occurs as slumped blocks in a succession of volcanic ashes exposed in a faulted block within the Pettycur Caravan Site. The base of the section comprises a series of coarse and fine ashes but the top of the unit also contains limestone layers that range in thickness from 5–50 cm thick and in some cases are lense-shaped. These show evidence of crude bedding but also evidence of slumping. The limestone blocks are supported within a matrix of mud, silt, ash and basalt fragments and have a calcite micritic groundmass, with some areas containing scattered permineralized plants (Scott 1990b). There may be also scattered charcoal fragments. However, most of the charcoal is found in distinctive zones within the limestone. The charcoal ranges in size from a few mm to larger charcoaled wood fragments up to one or two cm in length. The charcoal fragments were well mixed in terms of size and comprise a range of plant organs – pollen organs, leaves, stems, wood and the ovule described herein, together with abundant arthropod coprolites. Rare arthropod cuticles are also found, as well as occasional fish bones (Scott et al. 1986).

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Charcoal may be produced both from the activity of wildfire (Scott 2010) but also from plants being entombed in hot volcanic ashes (Scott and Glasspool 2005; Scott 2010). However, in the case of plants charred by entombment in hot volcanic ashes such as pyroclastic flows, the wood charcoal is often found as whole stems or trunks, in some cases 10s or 100s cms in length (Scott 2010). In wildfire charcoal, the

350 size range is much smaller (Scott 1989) as the charcoal is formed by incomplete
351 combustion (Scott 2010). The Kingswood charcoal is most likely to have been
352 formed by the activity of wildfire. At Kingswood it has been previously noted that
353 the taxa preserved as charcoal are quite different from those preserved as calcareous
354 permineralizations (Scott et al. 1986). Charcoalified fragments were produced from
355 the activity of wildfire and could form from plants subjected to fire as part of the
356 living vegetation or as litter. The occurrence of large numbers of charred coprolites
357 suggest that the litter has been charred as the coprolites are typical of arthropod
358 coprolites produced by detritivores in the litter layer (Scott and Taylor 1983; Scott et
359 al. 1992). However the large number of pollen organs present which still contain
360 pollen (Meyer-Berthaud 1989) suggest that living vegetation was also subjected to
361 fire, possible low temperature surface fires. The ovule is also likely to have been
362 charred whilst still attached to the living plant. If this was the case, the effect of the
363 fire upon the morphology and anatomy of the ovule needs to be considered.

364 Change in the dimensions of plant tissues in experimental charcoalification
365 suggests that increasing the temperature of the wildfire can cause plant tissues to
366 shrink, perhaps up to 50% (Lupia 1995; Belcher et al. 2005; McParland et al. 2007;
367 Henry and Théry-Parisot 2014). However, many of these experiments expose the
368 plants to high temperatures of > 450 °C for one or several hours. In the case of low
369 temperature surface fires, temperatures may have been between 300 and 400 °C for
370 minutes rather than hours (Scott et al. 2000; Belcher and Hudpith 2016) and hence
371 may not have undergone such a significant level of shrinkage. In hotter crown fires,

372 leaves and fertile organs from the living plants tend to be consumed by the fire and
373 any leaf charcoal is predominantly produced in the litter (Scott 2010). By contrast, in
374 long-time charring experiments (> 1 hour) with flowers and seeds, shrinkage has
375 been observed up to 50% (Lupia 1995). In the case of the ovule described here it is
376 unlikely that this level of shrinkage took place, as there is no evidence of any residual
377 high temperature features such as bubbling (Scott 1989). However, it has been noted
378 that in non-woody plant axes that even at 500°C different plant tissues may char
379 differently causing separation and differential shrinkage (McParland et al. 2007). In
380 wet specimens of wood rapid heating may cause instantaneous evaporation of water
381 and this may cause the sudden expansion of tissues (Harris 1958). We conclude that
382 the measurements provided for the ovule here are likely to be within 80% of the
383 original size and that morphological features seen have not been significantly
384 modified from their original condition. As such, *Hirsutisperma* would still have been
385 a very small seed prior to charcoalification, possibly up to 2.5 mm long and 1.5 mm
386 wide assuming an 80% size reduction. However, an interesting possibility might be
387 that different tissues in *Hirstutisperma* reacted differently to charcoalification. For
388 instance, the parenchymatous central column may have shrunk more than the robust
389 cells of the pollen chamber wall surrounding it, potentially making an ontogenetically
390 mature ovule in which the pollen chamber was sealed by the central column appear to
391 be in a pollination configuration with a gap for pollen to enter into the pollen
392 chamber due to taphonomy.

393 The limestone at Kingswood has been interpreted as being deposited at the
394 margins of a crater lake (Scott et al. 1986; Scott 1990b). In such a case the plants
395 preserved as charcoal may have been living higher on the flanks of the crater or on
396 the crater rim and following a wildfire, post-fire erosion washed the slurry of
397 sediment and charred plants (Scott 2010; Scott et al. 2014) in to the lake. This fits
398 with the interpretation of *Hirsutisperma* being an *r*-selected species living in an
399 unstable environment with low competition pressures as outlined below. The range of
400 charcoal sizes and organ types suggests that the plants have not been subjected to
401 extensive transport (see Nichols et al. 2000; Scott 2010) and the evidence of distinct
402 bands of charcoal that also contains charred litter and coprolites together with rock
403 fragments supports this conclusion.

404

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Comparisons

406 The gross morphology of the ovule and in particular its exposed nucellar apex
407 with a central column and dome-shaped pollen chamber, and its lobate integument,
408 firmly places the Kingswood ovule within the hydrasperman (=lagenostomalean-
409 type) pteridosperms (Rothwell 1986; Hilton and Bateman 2006). Features that
410 separate it from previously recognized hydrasperman ovules are its small size and its
411 dense covering of long, slender, intertwined and twisted hairs. The very dense and
412 spiral arrangement of hairs is especially striking in Figure 6c and 6d and unlike all
413 other recognised Paleozoic ovules. Other Mississippian ovules have hairs on the
414 exterior of the integument, but in each case these are interpreted as straight, solid and

415 lacking glandular apices, for example in *Salpingostoma* (Gordon 1941),
416 *Dolichosperma* (Long 1975), and *Tantalloperma* (Barnard & Long 1973).
417 *Stamnostoma oliveri* is small, 3.1 mm long and 1.5 mm wide and is reported to have
418 short papillae (Rothwell and Scott 1992), but again the nature of its preservation and
419 method of study may make this difficult to interpret. The stratigraphically younger
420 ovule *Physostoma elegans* (Oliver 1909) has a dense growth of club-shaped hairs on
421 the external surface of integument and lobes, but its hairs are considerably thicker
422 and are neither helically arranged nor have glandular apices. Like the Kingswood
423 ovule, *P. elegans* appears to lack a salpinx (Oliver 1909), but the ovule is larger at
424 5.5–6 mm long and up to 2 mm wide, and has 10 integumentary lobes.

425 From the Mississippian of Scotland there are three previously known ovule
426 species that like *Hirsutisperma* have longitudinal ridges on the seed body that
427 develop apically into integumentary lobes; *Salpingostoma* (Gordon 1941),
428 *Tantalloperma* (Long 1973) and *Dolichosperma* (Long 1961). All are considerably
429 larger than *Hirsutisperma* (Table 1) and have integuments with sparse hairs, with
430 *Salpingostoma* distinguished by its trumpet-shaped salpinx, while *Tantalloperma*
431 and *Dolichosperma* each have a wide, funnel-shaped salpinx. Although less well-
432 preserved in comparison to *Hirsutisperma*, the integument of *Tantalloperma* (Long
433 1973) also comprises a multiseriate endotesta lacking secretory, and a thin zone of
434 sclerotesta comprising 1-2 rows of small, dense cells on the external margin of the
435 ovule (see Long 1973, fig. 33). We consider *Hirsutisperma* to be more closely related
436 to *Tantalloperma*, *Salpingostoma* and *Dolichosperma* than to other hydrasperman

437 type ovules based on the presence of longitudinal ridges below the level of the
438 integumentary lobes and their integumentary hairs.

439 The structure of the nucellar apex in the Kingswood ovule is unusual amongst
440 hydrasperman taxa that typically have an elongate, tubular salpinx emanating from
441 the apex of the pollen chamber (Rothwell 1986; Hilton and Bateman 2006). In the
442 Kingswood ovule the pollen chamber terminates abruptly with a large opening
443 through which the central column is visible but does not protrude from. The apical
444 cells of the pollen chamber are complete (Fig. 1*d*; Fig. 2*b*, Fig. 5*l*) from which we
445 consider it unlikely that the salpinx has been lost taphonomically. The occurrence of
446 thickened walls in the epidermal cells of the pollen chamber that show a gradient in
447 decreasing size towards the opening (see fig. 2*b*, fig. 5*l*) is a strong argument
448 supporting a mature stage, rather than inferring the nucellar apex to be immature
449 from which a salpinx has yet to develop. Further development of such a tissue
450 constituting thickened (? lignified) cells is hardly conceivable.

451 Despite the evidence presented above, we cannot fully exclude the possibility
452 that a tubular salpinx in *Hirsutisperma* was destroyed taphonomically; this is
453 discussed below. Ovules of *Salpingostoma* are somewhat comparable to
454 *Hirsutisperma*; in his description of *Salpingostoma* ovules contained in
455 *Calathospermum* cupules, Walton (1949, Plate III, fig. 22) illustrated detail of the
456 pollen chamber with thickened, dome cells similar to those of our specimen but these
457 are in continuity with a central tubular salpinx. In *Salpingostoma*, the salpinx is very

458 thin with cells hardly distinguishable and would certainly be very fragile, if not
459 protected by the surrounding integument lobes (Walton 1949; Gordon 1941).

460 A similarly broad dome-shaped pollen chamber lacking a salpinx as seen in
461 *Hirsutisperma* is known in other Mississippian ovules including the stratigraphically
462 contemporaneous species *Sphaerostoma ovale* from Pettycur (Benson 1914; Table 1).
463 Our views from above the pollen chamber (e.g. fig. 1*d*, fig. 5*l*) are similar to
464 Benson's Text-Fig. 2*b* and Plate II, figs. 7 and 10 that show the roof of the pollen
465 chamber in surface view and the central column. In *Sphaerostoma*, like in the
466 Kingswood ovule, the pollen chamber cells possessed thickened walls, which have
467 been compared by Benson (1914) to a fern "multiseriate annulus". Most importantly,
468 Benson (1914) was able to compare ontogenetically mature and younger ovules from
469 *Sphaerostoma*; in younger ovules epidermal cells are thin walled and the overlying
470 parenchyma is undergoing lysigenic degeneration. She proposed a summary of
471 development stages, namely: "... special thickening of the roof-cells of the pollen
472 chamber. Concomitant lysigenic degeneration of the subjacent tissue leading to the
473 excavation of the pollen chamber. Circumsessile dehiscence and consequent
474 formation of a stomium by the upward movement of the free margin of the roof. The
475 retention of the pollen by the downward curvature of the roof..." (Benson 1914, pg.
476 12). Such an interpretation may be applied to our new ovule for which this would
477 represent a distinct condition within the hydrasperman pollination syndrome and
478 inferring a close relationship of the Kingswood ovule with *Sphaerostoma*.

479 *Sphaerostoma* is larger than the Kingswood ovule at 3.5 mm long and 2.2 mm
480 wide, and is further distinguished by its apical integument comprising eight short
481 integumentary lobes composed of large cells constituting a crest or “frill”
482 surrounding the micropyle (Table 1). A further difference is that *Sphaerostoma* was
483 borne inside a uniovulate cupule and thus, at the time of its description, was
484 considered comparable to the stratigraphically younger genus *Lagenostoma* (Oliver
485 and Scott 1904).

486 It is important to consider the ontogenetic stage of *Hirsutisperma* in relation to
487 other Mississippian ovules to consider if this explains the unusual features of its
488 nucellar apex and absence of the salpinx. Differences in size of the pollen chamber of
489 the ovules shown in Table 1 does not result from different degrees of ontogenetic
490 development; in all cases, the pollen chamber is “mature” with pollen chamber wall
491 cells thickened. Comparison of the size of the pollen chamber in relation to the size
492 of the ovule (or of its nucellar cavity) is about the same (Table 1), suggesting that the
493 smaller ovules will not increase significantly in size on becoming “fully mature”. The
494 next ontogenetic steps for maturity concern megagametophyte and archegonia
495 development. As the taxa in Table 1 lack cellular megagametophytes and
496 archaeogonia, all are in an immature growth stage, as demonstrated by Rothwell
497 (1986), hence at a similar ontogenetic stage.

498

499

Seed ecology

500 *Hirsutisperma* appears to be in the pollination configuration of its
501 hydrasperman reproduction life cycle (Rothwell 1986) in which the distal opening of
502 the pollen chamber remains open for pollen reception and retention prior to
503 fertilisation. This is distinct from the hydrasperman post-pollination configuration
504 where the central column is pushed outwards by the developing megagametophyte
505 and seals off the opening to the pollen chamber from within (Rothwell, 1986). This,
506 combined with the absence of tissues of the megagametophyte would suggest that the
507 ovule was ontogenetically immature, contradicting our earlier interpretation that it
508 was mature. The opening to the pollen chamber is 95–110 μm in diameter, but with
509 the central column in its current position a gap of 20–70 μm exists between the
510 two that would present a size barrier for (pre-)pollen of larger diameter to enter the
511 pollen chamber.

512 Although we do not know how *Hirsutisperma* was borne on the parent plant as
513 it was found isolated, existing evidence supports all hydrasperman-type ovules being
514 borne within a cupule; where hydrasperman-type ovules are known in attachment to
515 the parent plant they are cupulate. Cupules were either uniovulate such as
516 *Pseudosporogonites* (Prestianni et al. 2013), *Sphaerostoma* (Benson 1914),
517 *Lagenostoma* (Oliver and Scott 1904), uni- or biovulate like the minute *Ruxtonia*
518 (Galtier et al. 2007) or multiovulate such as *Elkinsia* (Rothwell et al. 1989),
519 *Xenotheca* (Hilton and Edwards 1999), *Stamnostoma* (Long 1960b) and
520 *Calathospermum* (Barnard, 1960) amongst others. In most well documented cupules,
521 the ovule pedicel is very short and narrow, if not absent. This is in contrast with the

522 situation in *Calathospermum* that bear ovules of *Salpingostoma dasu* (Gordon 1941)
523 which possess a thin and long pedicel like *Genomosperma kidstonii* (Long 1960a)
524 and probably in our new ovule. This is of interest because the organization of the
525 *Calathospermum* cupule is quite distinct and may eventually suggest a dispersal of
526 the mature pedicellate ovules. If this was the case for the new ovule, the hairy
527 integument would represent an adequate adaptation. Our small new ovule was
528 certainly very light and the very dense and spirally arranged covering of hairs would
529 have presented a highly efficient adaptation to wind dispersal. An interesting
530 possibility might be that the spirally arranged hairs are in some way related to
531 dispersal of the ovule from a cupule, or perhaps for stopping arthropods entering into
532 the cupule. However, we have no ways of assessing these concepts based on the
533 single specimen available.

534 The small size of ovules of *Hirsutisperma* suggests that its parent plant was in
535 terms of the traditional ecological *r/K* selection continuum (Taylor et al. 1990) an *r*-
536 selected species, producing large numbers of small propagules each with a low
537 potential of surviving to adulthood. *R*-selected species are adapted to life in less
538 crowded ecological niches with low competition pressure, and are considered as
539 pioneering species, often living in unstable or changing environments (MacArthur
540 and Wilson 1967), as previously interpreted for the Kingswood flora (Scott 2010;
541 Scott et al. 2014). By contrast, based on evidence from size, larger hydrasperman
542 ovules such as *Genomosperma* (Long 1960a) and *Salpingostoma* borne in cupules of
543 *Calathospermum* (Gordon 1941; Walton 1949; Barnard 1960) were more likely to

544 have been *K*-selection species, living in more established ecological settings with
545 higher competition pressures. For *K*-selective species it is advantageous to produce
546 fewer but larger propagules, providing each with a higher potential to reach maturity
547 and produce the next generation. *Hirsutisperma* suggests ecological niche
548 partitioning existed in Mississippian hydrasperman-type ovules.

549

550 *Plant:animal relationships*

551 The ovule is characterised by spirally arranged glandular hairs that also have
552 spirally twisted groups of hair. It is pertinent to ask what would the function of these
553 be and how might this provide further paleoecological data. We see three alternatives,
554 namely:

555 1. The glands contain repellent such as resin or other phytochemical (see
556 Farmer, 2014) to deter feeding arthropods from granivory. During the Mississippian
557 there are no records of flying insects but herbivores included millipedes, springtails
558 (Collembola) and mites (see Scott and Taylor 1983; Scott et al. 1992; Labandeira
559 1998, 2002, 2006, 2007). Millipedes are cms in size and tend to feed on dead plant
560 material; certainly some of the coprolites from Kingswood could have come from
561 them (Rothwell and Scott 1988; Scott et al. 1992). Collembola are much smaller and
562 could have been responsible for feeding on the living plants but would have been
563 unlikely to eat entire seeds, even as small as *Hirsutisperma*. Finally, mites are still
564 smaller (see Scott and Taylor 1983; Labandeira 2007) and might have bored into the
565 living plant tissues but would have been too small to eat it. We consider this the most

566 likely function for the glands, especially if the plant was living in an active volcanic
567 terrain in which perhaps removing toxins from the plant taken up through growth
568 may have been important. We consider it unlikely that these glands contained resin as
569 there appears not to be any solid residue preserved. It has been shown (Olivera et al.
570 2018) that if herbivory pressure is high enough then the plant may have evolved
571 glandular trichome secretions in response to it. This is even the case for very small
572 plant organs where there may be pressure from spider mites or other herbivores
573 (Walters 2017). Many secretions have also a dual role (Schnetzler et al. 2017) to be
574 both anti-herbivore but also anti-microbial (Farmer 2014). The tip of the gland could
575 act as a physical defence but when broken, for instance by an arthropod, could release
576 its toxins (Walters 2017).

577 2. The glands contain an attractant (see Aranguren et al. 2018 for an example)
578 to promote visitation of an arthropod carrying pollen. We have no evidence of this. It
579 is difficult to imagine one of these groups acting as a pollinator (see comments about
580 the larger *Arthropleura* during the Pennsylvanian by Scott and Taylor 1983 and
581 Labendeira 2002) and this contradicts existing evidence that suggests hydrasperman-
582 type ovules were wind pollinated (see below).

583 3. The glands contain a sticky substance that is exuded to help catch either
584 arthropod-carried pollen or more likely to catch wind-born pollen. Although
585 hydrasperman-type ovules were anemophilous (see Niklas 1981, 1985), pollen
586 needed to enter the nucellar apex to facilitate pollination for which a pollen drop
587 mechanism would have been beneficial. Pollen drops are widespread in extant seed

610 same whole-plant species. Of particular note is the presence of spirally arranged
611 glandular hairs (trichomes) that may have contained phytochemicals that could have
612 acted as an anti-herbivore or anti-fungal agent. The parent plant may have lived on
613 well-drained volcanic soil and was subjected to wildfire that preserved the ovule as
614 charcoal.

615

616

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628

629

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837

838

Figure captions

839 **Fig. 1.** LVSEM images of *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen. et sp. nov. showing gross
840 morphology. All images of the holotype (V 68764). *a*, Entire ovule in semi-oblique
841 lateral view showing narrow chalaza (C) at pedicel level, apically free integumentary
842 lobes (IL) and nucellar apex, and prominent integumentary hairs. Scale = 500 μm . *b*,
843 Chalazal region of ovule showing dense covering of counter clockwise twisting, long,
844 slender integumentary hairs. Scale = 200 μm . *c*, Apical transverse view showing long
845 hairs (H) on exterior of the integument and eight apically incomplete integumentary
846 lobes surrounding the exposed central nucellar apex. Scale = 200 μm . *d*, Enlargement
847 of *c* showing large rectangular cells of the pollen chamber wall (PCW) with apical
848 opening and revealing cellular central column (CC) within. Scale = 100 μm .

849

850 **Fig. 2.** Virtual longitudinal tomographic sections from the SRXTM data of
851 *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen. et sp. nov., showing internal organisation and anatomy.
852 All images of the holotype (V 68764), scale bars = 250 μm . *a*, Section through
853 chalaza (C) to base of the nucellar apex showing maximum height of the conical
854 nucellar cavity (NC). *b*, Section through distal part of ovule with integumentary lobes
855 (IL), and nucellar apex showing small-celled central column (CC) and pollen
856 chamber (PC) with decreasing cell size towards the distal opening. *c*, Vertical
857 paradermal view of the side of the domed pollen chamber wall (PCW) above the

858 nucellus (N) and megaspore (M) and longitudinal section of two integumentary lobes
859 (IL). *d*, Vertical and oblique to paradermal section of three integumentary lobes (IL).

860

861 **Fig. 3.** Virtual transverse tomographic sections from the SRXTM data of
862 *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen. et sp. nov., showing internal organisation and anatomy.
863 All images of the holotype (V 68764) and at same scale for comparison; scale bars =
864 200 μm . *a*, Ovule pedicel with central vascular strand (arrow) (section a900). *b*, Base
865 of nucellar cavity with initiation of 8 integumentary vascular strands (arrows)
866 surrounded by hairs (a700). *c*, Maximum diameter of the nucellar cavity and lateral
867 fusion of integumentary lobes (arrows) (a220). *d*, Coalescence of nucellus and
868 integumentary lobes (b550); conjoined (J) integument and nucellus (N), and distinct
869 megaspore (M). *e*, Nucellus (N) free from integument lobes below pollen chamber
870 (b510). *f*, Maximum diameter of the central column (CC) (b470). *g*, Maximum
871 diameter of the pollen chamber (PC) with uniseriate wall (b420). *h*, paradermal view
872 of top of the pollen chamber (arrow) (b400). *i*, Free integumentary lobes above pollen
873 chamber with few exterior hairs (b350).

874

875 **Fig. 4.** LVSEM images of *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen. et sp. nov. showing
876 organisation of the hairs on the exterior of the integument. All images of the holotype
877 (V 68764). *a*, Portion of an integumentary lobe with many hairs removed revealing
878 epidermal cells and hair bases. Scale = 100 μm . *b*, Enlargement of *a* showing
879 epidermal cells and basal regions of hollow hairs with twisted structure. Scale = 20

880 μm . *c*, Enlargement of *a* revealing elongate epidermal cells and hollow hairs with
881 spiralled structure. Scale = 20 μm . *d*, Outer epidermis of an integumentary lobe with
882 vertically elongated rectangular cells, and a complete hair with glandular tip (arrow).
883 Scale = 100 μm . *e*, Enlargement of *d* showing glandular apex of hair with spirally
884 organised thickenings. Scale = 10 μm . *f*, Hairs with hollow centres and spiralled,
885 glands with pointed, nipple-like apices. Scale = 50 μm . *g*, Incomplete apical gland
886 with prominent spiralling. Scale = 10 μm . *h*, Broken hairs with central bodies and
887 divisions. Scale = 10 μm . *i*, Spirally arranged broken hairs organised in bundles.
888 Scale = 200 μm .

889

890 **Fig. 5.** Anatomy of the integument and nucellus of *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen. et
891 sp. nov. from transverse SRXTM data of the holotype (V 68764). Section numbers
892 indicated in parentheses; scale bars *a–d, f* = 100 μm , *e, g–l* = 50 μm . *a*, Pedicel
893 showing bundles of hairs, uniseriate epidermis (EP), and single vascular strand
894 (a0933). *b*, Base of nucellus (N) with two layered integument and with uniseriate
895 epidermis (EP) and bundles (B) of radiating hairs (a0801). *c*, Denser covering of
896 hairs envelops uniseriate epidermis and integument with outer zone of small cells and
897 inner one of larger cells. Integumentary lobes starting to develop, with eight
898 integumentary vascular bundles (arrows) and a small nucellar cavity (NC) (a0700). *d*,
899 Incipient integumentary lobes with hairs restricted to lobe exteriors, and nucellus (N)
900 fused to integument and megaspore (M) visible (a0413). *e*, Four integumentary lobes
901 with uniseriate epidermis, exterior zone of small cells (1) bounded by larger cells on

902 the interior (2). Nucellus fused to integument and megaspore in places attached to
903 nucellus (b0633). *f*, Incipient integumentary lobes (still in narrow contact with the
904 nucellus, arrows) with central zone (2) of radiating, large, thin walled cells and outer
905 zone of small cells (1) (a0127). *g*, Basalmost section of the free nucellus
906 corresponding to the constricted "plinth" region (b510). *h*, Single integumentary lobe
907 showing central vascular stand surrounded by thick walled cells, and radiating small
908 cells (a0080). *i*, Base of the pollen chamber (PC) showing domed central area and
909 thick, rectangular cells of the pollen chamber wall (PCW) (a0053). *j*, Widest part of
910 the central column (CC) with uniseriate pollen chamber wall (PCW) (b0470). *k*,
911 Widest section of the pollen chamber with smaller central column (CC) and large
912 space (or annular cavity) inside the pollen chamber (PC) (b0420). *l*, View from above
913 of the pollen chamber with central column (CC) approaching apical opening with
914 smaller rectangular cells near the opening at right (b400).

915

916 **Fig. 6.** External morphology virtual reconstruction of *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen.
917 et sp. nov. from the 3-dimensional SRXTM dataset using Drishti (by A.R.T.
918 Spencer). All images of the holotype (V 68764) and from dataset A; all scale bars =
919 250 μ m. *a*, External, lateral view of the basal-medial part of the ovule, showing dense
920 exterior covering of long, slender hairs with spiral arrangement. *b*, Virtual
921 longitudinal section through the ovule showing conical form. *c*, Virtual transverse
922 section through chalaza and base of the nucellus showing the dense mat of spirally
923 arranged hairs. *d*, Virtual transverse section through mid-point of ovule showing

924 spirally arranged hairs at level with incipient integumentary lobes. *e.* Apical view of
925 ovule showing three more complete integumentary lobes and more fragmentary
926 remains of the others. *f.* Oblique view of ovule with virtual transverse section through
927 the nucellar apex showing central column, pollen chamber and integumentary lobes
928 surrounded by thin mat of hairs. *g.* Virtual transverse section through pollen chamber
929 showing irregular, large cells in the pollen chamber wall, and base of the pollen
930 chamber adjacent to the central column. *h.* Virtual longitudinal section through apex
931 of ovule revealing central column protruding from the apex of the pollen chamber
932 opening but with a gap between it and the pollen chamber roof.

933

934 **Fig. 7.** LVSEM images of *Hirsutisperma rothwellii* gen. et sp. nov. showing inner
935 surface of the integumentary lobes and integumentary bundles. All images of the
936 holotype (V 68764); scale bars *a* = 200 μm , *b* = 100 μm , *c*, *d* = 20 μm . *a.* Internal
937 surface of the integumentary lobes showing fibrous texture; no hairs are attached to
938 the internal surface. *b.* Enlargement from *a* showing detail of the fibrous texture. *c.*
939 Fractured integumentary lobe apex revealing transverse section through an
940 integumentary xylem bundle (arrow) with mesarch organisation, surrounded by thin
941 walled cells. *d.* Fractured integumentary lobe showing an xylem bundle in
942 longitudinal section with scalariform thickening of tracheids (arrow).

943

944 **Table 1.** Comparison of Mississippian aged ovules most similar to *Hirsutisperma* gen.
945 nov. All measurements in mm.

946 **Supplementary data files.**

- 947 • Hirsutisperma_rothwellii_video_dataset_b.avi
- 948 • Hirsutisperma_rothwellii_video_dataset_b.mov
- 949 • Hirsutisperma_rothwellii_video_dataset_b.mp4

950 3D reconstructions of *Hirsutisperma rothwelli* from SRXTM dataset 2 using Drishti

951 by A.R.T. Spencer showing apical features of the ovule in different file formats. The

952 3D structure of the ovule apex is especially clear, as is the incomplete nature of the

953 apical integumentary lobes.

	<i>Hirsutisperma</i> gen. nov.	<i>Dolichosperma</i> <i>sexangulatum</i>	<i>Salpingostoma</i> <i>dasu</i>	<i>Tantilloperma</i> <i>setigera</i>	<i>Sphaerostoma</i> <i>ovale</i>	
Ovule length	2	20	50	6	3.5	
Ovule diameter	0.8–1.25	2.6	6	1.2	2.2	
Integument and nucellus thickness	0.22	0.3–0.4	1–1.4	0.2	0.15	
Integument lobe and vascular bundle number	8	6	6	4	8	
Integument	Lobe length	> 1	7.5	25	>2	? <0.5
	Lobe diameter	0.3	0.4	1.4	0.4	? 0.2
	Hair length	>0.5	> 1.15	> 2–3	> 1	
Nucellar cavity	Shape	Obconical	Obconical	Obconical	Obconical	Ovoid
	Length	1.4	8	12	>3	>2
	Diameter	0.6	2	4	<1	1.4
Pollen chamber	Width	0.4	1.5	1.6	0.6	0.75
	Height	0.2	0.8	1	0.2-0.29	0.23
Central column	Width	0.24	0.7	?	0.2	<0.3
	Height	0.16	0.3	?	0.1	0.2
Salpinx length	Absent ?	0.5	6	0.3	Absent	
Source publications	This paper	Long (1975)	Gordon (1941)	Barnard and Long (1973)	Benson (1914)	

Table 1













