

Relict lineages with extreme ecology and physiology: metal hyperaccumulation on ultramafic substrates in New Caledonian Alseuosmineae (Asterales)

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23 Abstract

24

25 Background: Relict lineages are an important component of the biodiversity, but it is unclear 26 under what circumstances these groups persist. A potential example of such a group is the 27 Alseuosmineae (Asterales) of Oceania. This clade contains the three small families-28 Alseuosmiaceae, Argophyllaceae and Phellinaceae. The clade has highest diversity in New 29 Caledonia, where there are extensive ultramafic substrates, creating an extreme edaphic 30 environment. 31 32 Aims: Using several lines of evidence we aimed to show that Alseuosmineae qualify as a relict 33 lineage, with specialized adaptations for ultramafic substrates. 34 35 Methods: Molecular phylogenetics and dating analyses were carried out on representatives 36 from all Alseuosmineae genera. Metal concentration in 33 out of 44 Alseuosmineae species 37 was measured in herbarium specimens with XRF spectrometry. 38 39 Results: Dating analyses indicated that Alseuosmineae began diversifying about 75-80 million 40 years ago, and had much slower net diversification rates than other Asterales groups. One-third 41 of the species occur on ultramafic substrates in New Caledonia. Six are categorised as nickel 42 hyperaccumulators, and two as manganese hyperaccumulators. 43 44 Conclusions: Extinction was probably paramount in the history of Alseuosmineae, especially 45 for continental species. We postulate that their adaptation to ultramafic substrates and metal 46 accumulation may have contributed to their survival until today. 47

Keywords

49 Australia, island biogeography, molecular dating, refugium, serpentine

51 Introduction

52 Relicts are 'species or a group of species remaining from a large group that is mainly extinct' 53 (Grandcolas et al. 2014). The use of the term 'relicts' in evolutionary biology is ancient, as 54 Wallace (1880 p. 296) stated regarding the flora of Saint Helena: 'For, on the theory of 55 evolution, nothing can be more certain than that groups now broken up and detached were 56 once continuous, and that fragmentary groups and isolated forms are but the relics of once 57 widespread types, which have been preserved in a few localities where the physical conditions 58 were especially favourable, or where organic competition was less severe.' Stebbins (1950) 59 discussed the morphological features of Ranales, a group once thought to include 'primitive' 60 living angiosperms. He wrote (p.8): 'the group includes a high proportion of species which on 61 the basis of all characteristics must be placed not only in monotypic genera but even 62 monogeneric or digeneric families. They are obviously relict types of which the close relatives 63 have long since become extinct.' He (p.8) also noticed that 'the genera and species are at 64 present strongly concentrated in eastern Asia and Australasia', an idea that re-emerged later 65 (Morley 2001) when molecular phylogenetics shed new light on the true earliest diverging 66 lineages within angiosperms. The term 'relict' was also extensively used by Carlquist (1965, 67 1974) regarding island biology, particularly in the context of 'continental' islands. Related 68 concepts in paleobiology include 'bradytelic lineages' – lineages with little morphological 69 diversity, low rates of morphological change and low taxonomic diversity (Eldredge 1979), and 70 'dead clades walking' clades that survived extinction events only to become marginal or 71 eventually disappearing (Jablonski 2001). Importantly, species belonging to relict lineages may 72 be considered to have more values in conservation biology than species from larger and more 73 recent radiations, as they represent the sole survivors of groups with unique traits (Vane-Wright 74 et al. 1991).

75 The biodiversity hotpot of New Caledonia in the Southwest Pacific is well known for 76 being home to Amborella Baill., the sister group to all other extant angiosperms (Poncet et al. 77 2019). The term 'relict' was already present in the work of the earlier scholars of the New 78 Caledonian biota: Virot (1956, p.354), Holloway (1979, p.58, p.79), and many vascular plant 79 lineages there could qualify as relicts (Pillon et al. 2017). One such group is the 80 Alseuosmiaceae–Argophyllaceae–Phellinaceae (APA clade = suborder Alseuosmineae), with 81 ca. 44 species within the species-rich order Asterales (ca. 28000 spp. Christenhusz and Byng 82 2016). The existence and affinities of the APA clade were not suspected before the advent of 83 molecular phylogenetic studies (Kårehed et al. 1999). The genera now included in these three 84 families have been historically placed in various families, including Aquifoliaceae, 85 Caprifoliaceae, Escalloniaceae, or Saxifragaceae, that are quite distantly related (Angiosperm 86 Phylogeny Group IV, 2016). A later molecular phylogenetic study indicated that the enigmatic 87 and unplaced genus Platyspermation Guillaumin, originally described in Myrtaceae 88 (Guillaumin 1950), was sister to Alseuosmiaceae (Lundberg and Bremer 2003), where it is now 89 included. The APA clade now includes 7-8 genera and ca . 44 species (Table 1) from eastern 90 Australia, Lord Howe Island, New Caledonia, New Guinea, New Zealand, and Rapa Iti (Figure 91 1).

92 Similarly to most Asterales (see the review of Martínez-Millán 2010), the fossil record of 93 Alseuosmineae is sparse, consisting either of very recent fossils from the Quaternary or of three 94 well-assigned fossils from the Early Miocene of New Zealand (Conran et al. 2014; Pole 2008, 95 2010; see also Shepherd et al. 2020).

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100 Table 1. List of species in the Alseuosmineae with their natural distribution. Intraspecific and 101 hybrid taxa are not shown. Underlined: restricted to ultramafic substrates of New Caledonia, 102 Dotted underlined: occurring on ultramafic and other substrates in New Caledonia.

103

Alseuosmiaceae Airy Shaw Alseuosmia banksii A.Cunn. - New Zealand Alseuosmia macrophylla A.Cunn. New Zealand Alseuosmia pusilla Colenso – New Zealand Alseuosmia quercifolia A.Cunn. New Zealand Alseuosmia turneri R.O.Gardner - New Zealand Crispiloba disperma (S. Moore) Steenis - Australia Platyspermation crassifolium Guillaumin - New Caledonia $Wittsteinia (= Periomphale) balansae (Baill.) Steenis - New Caledonia$ Wittsteinia papuana (Steenis) Steenis - New Guinea Wittsteinia vacciniacea F.Muell. – Australia Argophyllaceae (Engl.) Takht. Argophyllum cryptophlebum Zemann Australia Argophyllum curtum A.R.Bean & P.I.Forst. Australia Argophyllum ferrugineum A.R.Bean & P.I.Forst. Australia Argophyllum heterodontum A.R.Bean & P.I.Forst. Australia Argophyllum iridescens A.R.Bean & P.I.Forst. Australia Argophyllum jagonis A.R.Bean & P.I.Forst. Australia Argophyllum lejourdanii F.Muell. Australia Argophyllum loxotrichum A.R.Bean & P.I.Forst. Australia Argophyllum nullumense R.T.Baker - Australia Argophyllum palumense A.R.Bean & P.I.Forst. Australia Argophyllum verae P.I.Forst. Australia $Argophyllum brevipetalum Guillaume - New Caledonia$ Argophyllum ellipticum Labill. New Caledonia Argophyllum grunowii Zahlbr. - New Caledonia Argophyllum montanum Schltr. - New Caledonia $Argophyllum nitidum J.R.Forst. & G.Forst. - New Caledonia$ Argophyllum vernicosum Däniker - New Caledonia $Argophyllum riparium$ Pillon & Hequet – New Caledonia Corokia buddleioides A. Cunn. - New Zealand Corokia cotoneaster Raoul - New Zealand Corokia macrocarpa Kirk - Chatham Islands Corokia carpodetoides (F.Muell.) L.S.Sm. Lord Howe Island Corokia collenettei L.Riley – Rapa Iti Corokia whiteana L.S.Sm. - Australia Phellinaceae (Loes.) Takht. Phelline barrierei Barriera & Schlüssel - New Caledonia Phelline billardierei Pancher ex Loes. - New Caledonia Phelline brachyphylla Baill. - New Caledonia Phelline comosa Labill. - New Caledonia Phelline dumbeensis Guillaumin - New Caledonia Phelline erubescens Baill. - New Caledonia Phelline gracilior (Loes.) Barriera – New Caledonia Phelline indivisa (Baill.) Harms & Loes. - New Caledonia Phelline lucida Vieill. ex Baill. - New Caledonia P helline macrophylla Baill. – New Caledonia

105 Figure 1. Distribution of Alseuosmineae (Asterales) in Oceania. 106

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107 The APA clade is most diversified in New Caledonia, with four genera (three endemic) 108 and 19 species (all endemic). This archipelago is also well-known for the extent of ultramafic 109 rocks that have shaped its flora (Isnard et al. 2016) and filtered some plant families (Pillon et 110 al. 2010). Ultramafic rocks are composed of minerals high in magnesium and metals including 111 nickel. These rocks weather to produce soils with extremely low Ca/Mg molar ratios and high 112 concentrations of metals available to plants (Kazakou et al. 2008; Proctor 2003). Some of the 113 specialised physiological adaptations of plants to ultramafic substrates are metal tolerance and 114 hyperaccumulation. New Caledonia is one of the world's major biodiversity hotspots for metal 115 hyperaccumulating plant species (Reeves et al. 2018). Within the APA clade Ni 116 hyperaccumulation was first reported in Argophyllum J.R.Forst. & G.Forst. (Jaffré 1980). More 117 recently a systematic screening of the herbarium of New Caledonia has also revealed Ni 118 hyperaccumulation in *Phelline* Labill. and manganese hyperaccumulation in *Platyspermation* 119 (Gei et al. 2020).

120 Relict lineages have often been studied with two approaches, (i) through the 121 reconstruction of ancestral characters, or *(ii)* through the reconstruction of ancestral areas in 122 biogeography, often with the wrong assumption that they have conserved ancestral characters. 123 Few of these studies have considered the particular ecological settings where relicts are more 124 likely to be found. Interpretations of the habitat conditions of the early diverging angiosperms 125 suggested a preference for shady, wet, and disturbed habitats (Feild et al. 2004), or tropical 126 montane cloud forests (Pouteau et al. 2020). Relicts within crown clades of angiosperms (i.e., 127 Eudicots and Monocots) have been comparatively less studied, but preferences for humid 128 subtropical/warm-temperate forests have also been found in 133 relict genera of East Asia 129 (Tang et al. 2018). Most studies have therefore focused on climatic preferences and have 130 emphasized the importance of Pleistocene glacial refugia (Cao et al. 2016; Pouteau et al. 2015). 131 In contrast, other authors (e.g., Parsons 2005) have suggested that relict lineages are more likely 132 to survive in harsh or fluctuating environments where the presence of predators or competitors 133 is less likely and reduces negative interspecific interactions. Alseuosmineae are therefore an 134 interesting model to investigate the ecological niches of relicts through analyses of plant-soil 135 interactions.

136 Alseuosmineae have been the subject of several recent taxonomic reviews that have 137 clarified species limits, particularly in the genera *Alseuosmia* A.Cunn. (Shepherd et al. 2020), 138 Argophyllum (Bean and Forster 2018; Pillon and Hequet 2021) and Phelline (Barriera 2017, 139 2020). The first aim of this study is to demonstrate that Alseuosmineae qualify as a relict 140 lineage. We use molecular phylogenetics and molecular dating analyses to reconstruct the 141 evolutionary history of the group. Particular attention is given to the New Caledonian endemic 142 genus Periomphale Baill. (sometimes included in Wittsteinia F.Muell.), which has never been 143 included in any molecular phylogenetic study. We also characterise edaphic preferences for

144 New Caledonian Alseuosmineae and determine their metal concentration with novel 145 measurements to measure the frequency of metal (hyper)accumulation in the group.

146

147 Material and methods

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149 DNA extraction and sequencing

150 Silica-dried leaf material of Periomphale balansae Baill. was obtained from the Herbarium of 151 New Caledonia (NOU, Bruy et al. 2022) (herbarium code according to Thiers 2021). Total 152 genomic DNA was extracted following a modified cetyltrimethylammonium bromide (CTAB) 153 protocol (Doyle and Doyle 1987).

154 Three plastid genes were amplified by PCR. The ATP synthase subunit beta (*atpB*) was 155 amplified in two fragments with the primers rbcL1pro from Mast et al. (2005), S1494R, S611 156 from Hoot et al.(1995) and S766RProt modified from Hoot et al. (1995). The NADH 157 dehydrogenase F (ndhF) was amplified in two fragments with primers -52pro, 972Rpro, 158 972Fgre and 2100Rgre from Mast et al. (2008). The ribulose bisphosphate carboxylase large 159 chain (rbcL) was amplified using primers rbcL1F of Fay et al. (1997) and rbcL889R from 160 Vidal-Russell and Nickrent (2008). The PCR amplification program consisted of 5 min of initial 161 denaturation at 80 °C, followed by 30 cycles of 1 min denaturation at 95 °C, 1 min of annealing 162 at 50 °C, 1.5 min elongation at 65 °C, and a final hold of 4 min at 65 °C. Purification and 163 bidirectional sequencing were carried out by an external service (Genoscreen, Lille, France) on 164 an automated sequencer using BigDye Terminator V3.1 Cycle sequencing kit. The resulting 165 sequences were deposited in GenBank (see Table S1 for the corresponding accession numbers).

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167 Molecular dataset

168 To establish the phylogenetic placement of Periomphale balansae we used GenBank to 169 assemble a molecular dataset consisting of the three sequenced plastid genes. We included 10 170 members of the APA clade, with at least one representative of all Alseuosmineae genera. 171 Species in Alseuosmiaceae included Alseuosmia macrophylla, Crispiloba disperma, 172 Platyspermation crassifolium, and Wittsteinia vacciniacea. Species in Argophyllaceae included 173 Argophyllum cryptophlebum, Argophyllum nullumense, and Corokia cotoneaster. Species in 174 Phellinaceae included Phelline billardierei, Phelline comosa, and Phelline lucida. For outgroup 175 selection, we included Stylidium graminifolium in the Stylidiaceae family. Phylogenetically, 176 Stylidiaceae is sister to Alseuosmineae (Ramírez-Barahona et al. 2020). As a more distinct 177 outgroup (see also Ramírez-Barahona et al. 2020) we selected Menyanthes trifoliata, a member 178 of the Menyanthaceae family. GenBank accession numbers and voucher information for all 179 corresponding sequences are presented in the Appendix.

180 The sequences of the three plastid gene fragments were slightly variable in length. Their 181 alignment was accomplished using MAFFT v7 (Katoh and Standley 2013) with default option 182 settings. For all gene fragments, we used Mesquite v3.61 (Maddison and Maddison 2019) to 183 check the coding frame for possible errors or stop codons. The combination of the three gene 184 fragments resulted in a combined matrix of 13 specimens and 5030 aligned characters (with ca. 185 16% of missing data).

186

187 Phylogenetic inference

188 Phylogenetic analyses were conducted using both Bayesian inference (BI) and maximum 189 likelihood (ML). For both analytical approaches, partitioned analyses were implemented to 190 improve phylogenetic accuracy (Nylander et al. 2004). The dataset was divided a priori into 191 nine partitions, with three partitions (one per codon position) defined for each chloroplastic

192 gene fragment. The best partitioning schemes and models were determined using ModelFinder 193 (Kalyaanamoorthy et al. 2017) with default settings.

194 Bayesian inference analyses were performed with BEAST v1.10.4 (Suchard et al. 2018). 195 The BI partitioned analyses consisted of 50 million generations of MCMC with the parameters 196 and trees sampled every 5000 generations. A maximum credibility tree was further generated 197 with TreeAnnotator v1.10.4 (Suchard et al. 2018), after removing the first 25% of topologies 198 as burn-in. Convergence of runs was assessed by examining the ESS of parameters under Tracer 199 v.1.7, using the recommended threshold of 200 (Drummond et al. 2006). Support of nodes for 200 the BEAST analyses was provided by clade posterior probabilities (PP), as directly estimated 201 from the majority-rule consensus topology. Nodes supported by $PP \ge 0.95$ were considered 202 strongly supported following Erixon et al. (2003).

203 Maximum likelihood analyses were conducted with IQ-TREE v2 (Minh et al. 2020). 204 The best-score ML tree was obtained using a heuristic search implementing 500 random-205 addition replicates with the following settings: random-starting tree, hill-climbing nearest 206 neighbour interchange (NNI) search (-allnni option), perturbation strength of 0.2 (-pers 0.2 207 option), partition-resampling strategy (--sampling GENE option), best partition scheme 208 allowing the merging of partitions $(-m \ MFP+MERGE)$ option). Support of nodes for the IQ-209 TREE 2 analyses was assessed using 1000 replicates for both ultrafast bootstraps (Minh et al. 210 2013) and SH-like approximate likelihood ratio tests (SH-aLRT; Guindon et al. 2010). Nodes 211 supported by ultrafast bootstrap values (uBV) \geq 95% and SH-aLRT values \geq 80% were 212 considered as strongly supported following authors' recommendations.

213

214 Molecular dating

215 Molecular dating analyses were carried out using Bayesian relaxed clocks as implemented in 216 BEAST v1.10.4 (Suchard et al. 2018). First, we implemented primary fossil calibrations relying 217 on the three Alseuosmineae fossils. The first is a dispersed leaf cuticle assigned to the genus 218 Argophyllum (see Pole 2008 for a complete description), from the Early Miocene of Central 219 Otago in New Zealand (fluvial-lacustrine Manuherikia Group). This formation is from the 220 Altonian stage of New Zealand dated at 15.9-19.0 Million years ago (Ma). As a conservative 221 estimate, we used the youngest age estimated for this formation (15.9 Ma) to set a minimum 222 age. Since our sampling for the genus *Argophyllum* is not comprehensive and because we 223 cannot exclude the possibility that this Miocene cuticle is sister to all extant Argophyllum 224 species, we used this as a stem calibration. The second calibration is based on a dispersed leaf 225 fossil cuticle assigned to the genus Phelline (see Pole 2010 for a complete description) also 226 found in the fluvial-lacustrine Manuherikia Group. Similarly to the $Argophvllum$ fossil, we used 227 this fossil for stem calibration with a minimum age of 15.9 Ma. The third fossil is a compression 228 fossil (flower) assigned to the genus Alseuosmia (see Conran et al. 2014) from the Early 229 Miocene of the Foulden Hills Diatomite Formation of New Zealand (Foulden Maar locality). 230 This formation is from the Early Miocene (16.0-23.0 Ma) and was also radiometrically dated 231 at ca. 23 Ma (Lindqvist and Lee 2009). This age corresponds to the age of the Aquitanian stage 232 (20.44-23.03 Ma; Walker et al. 2018). To be conservative we set a minimum age for the stem 233 of Alseuosmia at 20.44 Ma. For the three calibrated nodes and the root we also set a maximum 234 age which was conservatively based on the lowest boundary of the 95% HPD of the age of the 235 MRCA of Asterales (i.e., 114.93 Ma) from the study of Ramírez-Barahona et al. (2020).

236 In a complementary way we relied on secondary calibrations derived from the study of 237 Ramírez-Barahona et al. (2020) who analysed a multi-marker molecular dataset of 1209 taxa 238 encompassing all 435 currently recognized plant families. In this study, up to 238 fossil 239 calibrations were used to infer divergence time estimates within angiosperms. Importantly their 240 sampling includes 49 Asterales representatives, of which six belong to the APA clade. Based 241 on the taxa shared between our dataset and theirs, we were able to set secondary calibrations 242 for six nodes. We relied on ages estimated with the relaxed calibration dating strategy with the 243 complete fossil set: (i) MRCA of sampled Alseuosmiaceae (median age of 23.40 Ma; 95% 244 highest posterior densities, HPD: 5.05-45.53 Ma), (ii) MRCA of sampled Argophyllaceae 245 (median age of 18.75 Ma; 95% HPD: 5.45-34.50 Ma), (iii) MRCA of sampled Phellinaceae 246 (median age of 12.60 Ma; 95% HPD: 3.27-26.59 Ma), (iv) MRCA of sampled [Argophyllaceae 247 + Phellinaceae] (median age of 71.81 Ma; 95% HPD: 36.52-95.02 Ma), (v) MRCA of sampled 248 Alseuosmineae (median age of 81.07 Ma; 95% HPD: 48.18-102.23 Ma), and (vi) MRCA of 249 [Alseuosmineae + Stylidium graminifolium] (median age of 92.58 Ma; 95% HPD: 79.75-105.03 250 Ma). The corresponding calibrations were enforced using truncated normal distributions with 251 minimum and maximum ages reflecting the 95% HPD, and a standard deviation of 10 Ma.

252 For both analyses, the tree model was set to a birth-death speciation process (Gernhard 253 2008) to account more accurately for extinct and missing lineages. The other settings for the 254 BEAST analyses were similar to the settings used for the phylogenetic analysis carried out 255 beforehand (50 million generations of MCMC with the parameters and trees sampled every 256 5000 generations).

257 Net diversification rates were calculated based on the results of both dating analyses using the 258 equation #4 from Magallón and Sanderson (2001), and time to net speciation events with 259 equation #3. We compared diversification rates obtained here for Alseuosmineae with those 260 calculated for total Asterales, Asteraceae and Campanulaceae using crown ages from Ramírez-261 Barahona et al. (2020) and estimates of species numbers from Christenhusz and Byng (2016).

- 262
- 263 Ecology and metal measurements

264 Edaphic preferences of New Caledonian Alseuosmineae were obtained from the literature 265 including: Tirel and Jérémie (1996), Barriera (2020), and Pillon and Hequet (2021). 266 Additionally, information was obtained from descriptions on herbarium specimens labels from 267 the herbarium of New Caledonia (NOU) and the herbarium of Muséum national d'Histoire 268 naturelle (P).

269 We used a Niton XL3T 950 GOLDDTM + handheld XRF analyzer (Thermo Fisher 270 Scientific, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA) to screen herbarium specimens (see Belloeil et al. 271 2021; van der Ent et al. 2019; Invernón et al. 2021) at herbarium P. Each herbarium specimen 272 was placed on 2 mm titanium foil (#269489, Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, Missouri, USA) and 273 X-ray fluorescent spectra were recorded in the soil mode for 30 sec. using the main filter. The 274 analysis of spectra by the proprietary XRF quantification software (ver. HH-XRF_8.4G) 275 provided an estimated concentration in μ g.g⁻¹ for Mn and Ni, the two elements that are the focus 276 of this study. Up to ten specimens for each species were screened, to cover as broadly as 277 possible the distribution and substrate types of each species (Table S1).

278 Because this type of XRF measurements tend to overestimate Mn concentrations 279 (Belloeil et al. 2021, Gei et al. 2020), some analyses were validated with Microwave Plasma-280 Atomic Emission Spectroscopy (MP-AES). On a few selected herbarium specimens, one leaf 281 was removed and more than 100 mg was ground to powder in a high-speed benchtop 282 homogenizer (FastPrep®-24, MP Biomedicals, Solon, USA). The plant samples were analysed 283 at the Service d'Analyses Multi-Élémentaires (INRAE, Montpellier, France) where they were 284 digested in $HNO₃(65%)$ and $H₂O₂(30%)$ before MP-AES analysis (Chay and Mari 2017). The 285 data were deposited in TRY Plant Trait Database (Kattge et al. 2020)

286

287 Results

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289 Phylogenetic inference

290 In our Bayesian phylogenetic analysis of Alseuosmineae, all parameters showed ESS values $291 \geq 200$ for the BEAST analysis. Partitioned phylogenetic analyses yielded identical topologies 292 under BI and ML (Figure 2). Node support was high under BI with 12 nodes out of 13 with PP 293 >0.95 , whereas under ML, only four nodes were well supported with uBV $>95\%$ and SH-aLRT 294 \geq 20%. The suborder Alseuosmineae was resolved as monophyletic (PP of 1.0, uBV and SH-295 aLRT of 89%). Monophyly was also observed for the sampled representatives of 296 Alseuosmiaceae (PP of 1.0, uBV of 100%, SH-aLRT of 95.6%), Argophyllaceae (PP of 1.0, 297 uBV of 98%, SH-aLRT of 97.8%), and Phellinaceae (PP of 1.0, uBV of 100%, SH-aLRT of 298 99.6%). Argophyllaceae and Phellinaceae were recovered as sister lineages with either a high 299 support under BI (PP of 1.0) but a weak/moderate support under ML (uBV of 65%, SH-aLRT 300 of 43.8%). Periomphale balansae was placed as sister to Wittsteinia vacciniacea with moderate 301 support (PP of 0.93, uBV of 80%, SH-aLRT of 82.2%).

304 Figure 2. Dated phylogeny resulting from Bayesian evolutionary analysis sampling trees 305 (BEAST) analyses based on primary fossil calibrations [FOSS] (topology identical to the best-306 fit ML tree). Support values at nodes refer to posterior probabilities (PP), ultrafast bootstrap 307 values (uBV) and SH-like approximate likelihood ratio tests (SH-aLRT), in that order. Median

308 ages are also provided on nodes just below the support values. The three fossil constraints are 309 highlighted with stars. Horizontal bars on nodes represent 95% Highest Posterior Density 310 (HPD) of age estimates. Time scale (horizontal) in Ma (Paleo.: Paleocene, Oligo: Oligocene, 311 P: Pliocene). Example plant species photos on the right (from top to bottom): Platyspermation 312 crassifolium, Argophyllum ellipticum, Phelline barrierei.

313

314 Molecular dating

315 In our dating analyses of Alseuosmineae, all parameters showed ESS values ≥200 for all 316 BEAST analyses. The results of both analyses yielded dating estimates that were largely 317 overlapping (see Figure 2 for the analysis based on fossil calibrations [FOSS] and Figure S1 318 for the analysis relying on secondary calibrations based on the study of Ramírez-Barahona et 319 al. (2020) [R2020]), with slightly older ages for the fossil-constrained analysis [FOSS]. Age 320 estimates for the suborder Alseuosmineae suggested an origin between the Late Cretaceous and 321 the Paleocene (median age 80.85 Ma, 95% HPD: 59.14-99.48 Ma [FOSS]; median age 75.27 322 Ma, 95% HPD: 64.17-86.96 Ma [R2020]). The median age for the MRCA of Argophyllaceae 323 + Phellinaceae was estimated at about 71-76 Ma (median age 76.86 Ma, 95% HPD: 56.84- 324 96.67 Ma [FOSS]; median age 71.84 Ma, 95% HPD: 60.58-83.16 Ma [R2020]). The age 325 estimates for the MRCA of the sampled representatives of Alseuosmiaceae, Argophyllaceae, 326 and Phellinaceae were significantly younger: (i) for Alseuosmiaceae: median age 37.44 Ma, 327 95% HPD: 28.39-49.14 Ma [FOSS]; median age 29.13 Ma, 95% HPD: 20.46-38.24 Ma 328 [R2020]; (ii) for Argophyllaceae: median age 19.89 Ma, 95% HPD: 15.97-28.67 Ma [FOSS]; 329 median age 15.81 Ma, 95% HPD: 9.21-24.37 Ma [R2020]; and (iii) for Phellinaceae: median 330 age 13.06 Ma, 95% HPD: 6.41-22.40 Ma [FOSS]; median age 10.99 Ma, 95% HPD: 5.54-17.90 331 Ma [R2020]. The age of the MRCA of *Periomphale balansae* and *Wittsteinia vacciniacea* was 332 estimated at about 13-19 Ma (median age 19.71 Ma, 95% HPD: 13.68-25.96 Ma [FOSS]; 333 median age 12.90 Ma, 95% HPD: 7.28-19.39 Ma [R2020]). Net diversification rates of 334 Alseuosmineae were estimated to be between 0.038 [FOSS] and 0.041 [R2020], lower than that 335 of the entire Asterales (0.089), Campanulaceae (0.096), or Asteraceae (0.16).

336 Leaf metal concentrations

337 Leaf tissue Ni and Mn concentrations were measured for a total of 249 herbarium specimens 338 representing 33 species. In most specimens, Ni was below the level of detection; however, it 339 was consistently present in high concentrations in several species of Argophyllum from New 340 Caledonia (Figure 3).

341

342 Figure 3. Boxplots showing Ni and Mn foliar concentrations (μg g−1) measured by X-ray 343 fluorescence (XRF) scanning of herbarium specimens from 33 species of Argophyllaceae 344 (green), Phellinaceae (blue) and Alseuosmiaceae (red). The dashed lines are the 345 hyperaccumulation thresholds of Ni (1000 μg g−1) and Mn (10,000 μg g−1).

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347 All six Argophyllum species occurring on ultramafic substrates had some Ni values exceeding
348 the threshold of 1000 \mug.g<sup>-1</sup> (van der Ent et al. 2013) and therefore qualified as Ni
349 hyperaccumulators: A. brevipetalum, A. ellipticum, A. grunowii (syn. A. laxum, see Pillon & 
350 Hequet (2021), A. montanum, A. riparium, and A. vernicosum. Although the median of each of
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351 these species was below 1000, one specimen of A. ellipticum reached 6700 μ g.g⁻¹. Beside the 352 New Caledonian species of Argophyllum cited above, occasional concentrations that were 353 higher than the average were observed in some specimens of other species collected on 354 ultramafic substrates from New Caledonia: *Phelline gracilior* (Katépahié: 90 and 640 µg.g⁻¹, 355 Koumac: 270 μ g.g⁻¹), *Phelline macrophylla* (Isle of Pines: 70 μ g.g⁻¹) *Periomphale balansae* 356 (Mount Ninga: 60 μ g.g⁻¹, Ongone: 200 μ g.g⁻¹) and *Argophyllum lejourdanii* from Australia on 357 unknown substrate (Rockingham Bay: $40 \mu g.g^{-1}$).

358 Mn was above the detection threshold for most specimens and displayed great variation. 359 Two species endemic to ultramafic substrates of New Caledonia consistently displayed high 360 Mn concentration: *Phelline barrierei* (2500-57,000 μ g.g⁻¹, median = 19,500 μ g.g⁻¹, n = 9) and 361 Platyspermation crassifolium (3,600-71,500 μ g.g⁻¹, median=28,000 μ g.g⁻¹, n=10). Only a few 362 other specimens of occasionally had Mn values above 10,000 μ g.g⁻¹. They were all specimens 363 collected on ultramafic substrates of New Caledonia: Periomphale balansae (Bon Secours: $16,100 \mu$ g.g⁻¹), *Phelline comosa* (Kouaoua: 10,100 μ g.g⁻¹), *Phelline lucida* (Ouenarou: 22,000 365 μ g.g⁻¹,Tchingou: 18,000 μ g.g⁻¹, Mont Do: 10,000 μ g.g⁻¹) and one from New Zealand: 366 Alseuosmia macrophylla (Bay of Islands: 11000 μ g.g⁻¹). MP-AES measurements confirmed the 367 high Mn concentration in both *Phelline barrierei* (11,062 and 19,688 μ g.g⁻¹) and 368 Platyspermation crassifolium (9,615 and 30,068 μ g.g⁻¹), which clearly qualified as Mn 369 hyperaccumulators.

370 Figure 4 displays Ni/(Ni+Mn) and indicates that most specimens predominantly 371 accumulated either Ni and/ or Mn but very few accumulated both.

372

373 Figure 4. Relation between leaf concentrations of Ni and Mn in Alseuosmineae expressed as 374 the distribution of the values of the quotient Ni/(Ni+Mn). For the purpose of calculation, 375 concentrations below the detection limit were assigned the value of zero. Twelve out of 249 376 specimens were excluded due to Ni and Mn values below detection levels. Ni 377 hyperaccumulators are shown in green, and Mn hyperaccumulators in red. 378

379 Discussion

380

381 Generic concepts in Alseuosmiaceae

382 Alseuosmiaceae genera have a tumultuous taxonomic history because of the difficulty in 383 placing them in or near well-established families. Cunningham (1838) described the genus 384 Alseuosmia from New Zealand with eight species, which he did not place in any family but 385 suggested affinities with Caprifoliaceae, Cornaceae, and Loranthaceae. Von Mueller (1860) 386 described the genus and species Wittsteinia vacciniacea that he placed in Vaccinieae 387 (Ericaceae) based on material from Australia. Studying specimens from New Caledonia, 388 Baillon (1888) described the genus Periomphale and the two species Periomphale balansae 389 and Periomphale pancheri that he placed in Gesneriaceae. Later, Gilg and Schlechter (in

390 Schlechter 1906) described the genera and species Memecylanthus neocaledonicus and 391 Pachydiscus gaultherioides from New Caledonia. They placed these species in Caprifoliaceae, 392 noting affinities with Alseuosmia as well.

393 Airy Shaw (1965) established the family Alseuosmiaceae to accommodate Alseuosmia, 394 *Memecylanthus, and Periomphale* (including *Pachydiscus*). Based on a specimen collected in 395 New Guinea, van Steenis (1978) described Periomphale papuana, and also included 396 Memecylanthus in Periomphale. Later, van Steenis (1984a) established the connection between 397 Wittsteinia and Alseuosmia + Periomphale. The close similarities between Wittsteinia and 398 Periomphale prompted him to treat them as the single genus Wittsteinia (the oldest name), 399 encompassing all three species. He also added a genus to the family $-$ Crispiloba Steenis, based 400 on a species originally described in the genus Randia (Rubiaceae) from Australia (Queensland). 401 Later, Tirel (1996) disagreed with some of the morphological observations by van Steenis 402 (1984b) and re-established the genus Periomphale with a single species from New Caledonia.

403 Our phylogenetic analysis recovered Periomphale balansae as sister taxon to Wittsteinia 404 vacciniacea, with reasonable support (PP of 0.93, uBV of 80%, SH-aLRT of 82.2%). A broad 405 concept for *Wittsteinia* thus seems preferable for several reasons. A monotypic *Periomphale* 406 bears little phylogenetic information. The fact that van Steenis originally described Wittsteinia 407 papuana in the genus *Periomphale*, then thought to be restricted to New Caledonia, is a clear 408 indication that the plants from the two regions are sufficiently similar to be congeneric. 409 Wittsteinia in its broad sense is a strong indicator of the biogeographical affinities between 410 Eastern Australia, New Caledonia, and New Guinea, with similar distributions observed in 411 Sphenostemon (Paracryphiaceae, Dickison and Lundberg 2016) or Dubouzetia 412 (Elaeocarpaceae, Coode 2004).

413 Guillaumin (1950) originally described Platyspermation in Myrtaceae, but the genus 414 has always been difficult to place by most authors. Only molecular phylogenetics (Lundberg 415 and Bremer 2003) firmly placed the genus as sister to the family Alseuosmiaceae where it has 416 generally been placed ever since. It is interesting to note that van Steenis, who investigated 417 thoroughly Alseuosmiaceae, also published a note on *Platyspermation* (van Steenis 1982), and 418 considered it as allied to Carpodetus (Rousseaceae, also in Asterales), but did not mention at 419 all Alseuosmiaceae. Synapomorphies uniting Alseuosmiaceae, including Platyspermation, 420 remain to be found, but most of these plants have been little investigated. The family name 421 Platyspermataceae Doweld is available if this assemblage is judged too heterogeneous in the 422 future. However, considering their recent divergence (median age of either 29 Ma [R2020] or 423 37 Ma [FOSS]), segregating Platyspermataceae from Alseuosmiaceae would make these 424 families much younger than the average age of other angiosperm families (Ramírez-Barahona 425 et al. 2020).

426

427 Alseuosmineae, a relict lineage within Asterales

428 Alseuosmineae display several features of relict lineages. Phellinaceae are monogeneric, 429 Argophyllaceae digeneric, and Alseuosmiaceae consists of only four genera. The results of our 430 dating analyses indicate that Alseuosmineae are slightly older than the phylogenetically related 431 Campanulaceae (median age of 73.3 Ma for the Campanulaceae in Ramírez-Barahona et al. 432 2020) and yet has much lower species richness (44 vs. 2300 species). Indeed, Alseuosmineae 433 have net diversification rates half that of Asterales or Campanulaceae, and one quarter that of 434 Asteraceae. Using equation (3) of Magallon Sanderson (2001), we estimated that net speciation 435 events occurred on average every 17-18 Ma. The age of the genus Phelline is likely 436 underestimated here because of incomplete species sampling, but for other non-monotypic 437 genera (i.e., Alseuosmia, Argophyllum, Corokia and Wittsteinia), their stem-age fixes an upper 438 bound to their crown age at no more than 22 Ma [FOSS]. A similar result was found in a recent 439 study focused on *Argophyllum* and *Corokia* (Maurin and Smissen 2022), where the authors 440 inferred a median age of 18.0 Ma for the Argophyllaceae. With a complete species-level 441 sampling, it can be expected that the phylogenetic tree of the Alseuosmineae families and 442 genera would have a typical broom-and-handle shape with most speciation events being 443 younger than 22 Ma. Such tree shapes suggest high extinction rates (Condamine et al. 2015) 444 associated with the extinction of early branching lineages, likely in relation to the impact of the 445 Cretaceous-Paleogene (K-Pg) mass extinction (see Vajda and McLoughlin 2007 for the 446 corresponding floristic turnover in New Zealand). In addition, other well-documented events 447 could have further increased extinction rates in Alseuosmineae the played an important role, 448 noticeably, notably the Eocene drowning of New Caledonia until its re-emergence 25-34 Ma 449 (e.g., Cluzel et al. 2012, Giribet and Baker 2019), and the likely partial inundation of New 450 Zealand during the Oligocene marine transgression ca . 23-25 Ma (Wallis and Jorge 2018). High 451 extinction rather than low speciation rate is thus more likely to explain why Alseuosmineae 452 have much lower net diversification rates than related plant groups.

453 There is also fossil evidence for geographical extinction in Alseuosmineae. Leaf cuticle 454 from New Zealand has been attributed to the New Caledonian endemic *Phelline* (Pole 2010), 455 and to *Argophyllum*, now restricted to eastern Australia and New Caledonia (Pole 2008). No 456 fossils attributed to Alseuosmineae have yet been described outside their current range.

457 Alseuosmineae display an excess of representation on islands. Only a third of the species 458 are now restricted to former Sahul (14 in mainland Australia, and one in New Guinea). 459 Wittsteinia papuana is known from a single collection in New Guinea (van Steenis 1978). The 460 eleven species of Australian Argophyllum, Corokia whiteana, and Crispiloba disperma each 461 have relatively narrow distributions in north-east Australia (Queensland), while Wittsteinia 462 vacciniacea has a restricted range in south-west Australia (Victoria). Most of the 463 Alseuosmineae diversity is restricted to islands: Chatham Islands (1), Lord Howe Island (1) 464 New Caledonia (19), New Zealand (7), and Rapa Iti (1). The occurrence of Alseuosmineae on 465 isolated volcanic islands (Lord Howe Island, Rapa Iti) is also an indication of good dispersal 466 ability, assisted by birds, wind, or other means. Thus, the current range of Alseuosmineae is 467 more in line with an ongoing, long-term decline on continental Sahul, with islands likely 468 serving as (climatic) refugia.

469

470 Metal accumulation patterns

471 Our results confirm previous observations reporting that all six New Caledonian Argophyllum 472 species occurring on ultramafic substrates can be considered Ni hyperaccumulators (Jaffré 1977, Pillon and Hequet 2021). Gei et al. (2020) measured a Ni concentration of 2150 μ g.g⁻¹ in 474 one specimen at herbarium NOU identified as Phelline wagapensis (MacKee 16846, 475 Katépahié). Measurement of the duplicate specimen at P shows a lower concentration of 640 176 μ g.g⁻¹, with the specimen being identified as *Phelline gracilior*, while *Phelline wagapensis* is 477 now treated as a synonym of Phelline erubescens (Barriera 2020). Therefore, we consider that 478 the occurrence of Ni hyperaccumulation in the genus *Phelline* requires further validation.

479 Two species of Alseuosmineae qualify as Mn hyperaccumulators. We validated the 480 measurements of Gei et al. (2020) for Platyspermation crassifolium with new and more reliable 481 MP-AES measurements confirming that its Mn concentration exceeds 10,000 μ g.g⁻¹. We also 482 discovered another previously undetected Mn hyperaccumulator, *Phelline barrierei*, based on 483 MP-AES measurements. In several other species including Alseuosmia macrophylla, 484 Periomphale balansae, Phelline comosa, and Phelline lucida, a few specimens have XRF 485 measurements exceeding 10,000 μ g.g⁻¹ (up to 22,000 μ g.g⁻¹). However, considering that XRF 486 spectrometer tends to overestimate high Mn values by a factor of ca. 3.5 (Belloeil et al. 2021) 487 and that high values were observed only in a minority of specimens for each species, we regard 488 Mn hyperaccumulation in these species as doubtful, with currently available data.

489 Both Mn and Ni hyperaccumulation evolved independently on ultramafic substrates of New 490 Caledonia. Within Alseuosmineae, these two metal accumulation physiological pathways seem 491 to exclude each other as specimens could display either high Ni concentration or high Mn 492 concentration, but never both. This cannot simply be explained by ecological differences 493 because the Ni hyperaccumulator *Argophyllum ellipticum* is observed in the same locations as 494 the Mn hyperaccumulators *Phelline barrierei* (e.g., in Mount Paeoua) and *Platyspermation* 495 crassifolium (in Mount Humboldt and Mount Kouakoué). A similar pattern has previously been 496 observed in New Caledonian Cunoniaceae (van der Ent et al. 2022), suggesting that Mn and Ni 497 accumulation are at least partially distinct strategies implying different molecular, 498 physiological or anatomical pathways and structures.

499

500 Specialised ecology, specialised physiology

501 Alseuosmineae display a high affinity for ultramafic substrates, with 16 species (36%) in four 502 genera occurring on ultramafic rocks in New Caledonia, of which 10 are restricted to them. 503 This recurrent specialization for ultramafic substrates is remarkable considering the extreme 504 chemical conditions of these soils (Proctor 2003; Kazakou et al. 2008), and their limited 505 distribution globally, as well as within the entire Alseuosmineae range. They have not been 506 reported on ultramafic substrates in Eastern Australia (Batianoff et al. 2000, 1991), but this 507 could be explained by the narrow endemism of most Australian Alseuosmineae species (e.g., 508 Bean and Forster 2018). Similarly, despite extensive study and production of species lists, 509 Alseuosmia and Corokia spp. have not been recorded on New Zealand ultramafic substrates up 510 to the present time. Alseuosmia is most abundant in the western regions of the North Island 511 (Shepherd et al. 2020), while the largest ultramafic outcrops are in the southwest of the South 512 Island (van der Ent et al. 2015).

513 It is even more remarkable that metal hyperaccumulation occurs multiple times in 514 Alseuosmineae. Fourteen percent of Alseuosmineae species are Ni hyperaccumulators, while 515 only 0.18% of angiosperm species have this property according to the global inventory of metal 516 hyperaccumulators (Reeves et al. 2018). Similarly, Mn hyperaccumulating species represent 517 4.5% of Alseuosmineae and only 0.014% of angiosperms. It seems likely that Alseuosmineae 518 possess some exaptation to adapt to ultramafic substrates and to become metal 519 hyperaccumulators.

520 A lineage with a similar history may be Oncotheca Baill. This genus comprising two 521 species endemic to New Caledonia is almost restricted to ultramafic substrates, with one species 522 being a Ni hyperaccumulator (Jaffré 1980, Jaffré et al. 2013). This genus is the sole 523 representative of the family Oncothecaceae and possibly of the order Oncothecales, a lineage 524 of ca. 120 Ma (Zhang et al. 2020). The double insularity of New Caledonia (geographical and 525 ecological) has probably played a role in the persistence of such relict lineages. This may have 526 allowed them to escape competition from more successful groups, including the related 527 Asteraceae that are under-represented in New Caledonia (Pillon et al. 2010).

528 There are several lines of evidence that New Caledonia fits in the 'Old Climatically 529 Buffered Infertile Landscapes' (OCBILs; Pillon et al. 2021). When he introduced the OCBIL 530 theory, Hopper (2009) made several predictions, which included the persistence of old lineages 531 and nutritional specialisation. Alseuosmineae is a lineage where both features of an ancient, 532 relictual lineage and edaphic specialisation are combined. Cuba is the other area in the world 533 where metal hyperaccumulators are particularly diverse (Belloeil et al. 2021, Reeves et al. 1996, 534 1999). There, the greatest numbers of hyperaccumulators are found in the older ultramafic 535 terranes of the West and particularly the East that have been exposed for 10-30 Ma (Reeves et 536 al. 1996, 1999).This age is close to the emergence of New Caledonian substrates which 537 occurred sometimes between 25 and 34 Ma (Pillon et al. 2021). This suggests that the age of 538 ultramafic terrane (and possibly its stability) is an important factor for metal hyperaccumulation 539 to originate.

540

541 Conclusions

542 Alseuosmineae is a relict lineage with low net diversification rates that can probably be 543 explained by high extinction rates, geographical extinction, and narrow distributions 544 particularly on continents, in spite of dispersal abilities. Future phylogenetic studies should 545 consider sampling all species in order to estimate extinction rates throughout the history of this 546 lineage. Island refugia may have played an important role in the persistence of the diversity of 547 Alseuosmineae. Alseuosmineae display recurrent specialization for ultramafic substrates in 548 New Caledonia with multiple independent evolution of rare physiological syndromes: Ni and 549 Mn hyperaccumulation. Many more studies, on metallophytes or other lineages will be 550 necessary to determine whether relict lineages are more often generalists or specialists, and to 551 provide more detailed understanding of their diversification through time and their relative 552 niche breadth.

553

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565

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- 568

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860 Appendix List of taxa, voucher specimen (herbarium), and GenBank accession numbers for 861 *atpB, ndhF* and *rbcL*. Herbarium acronyms follow Thiers (2021).

862

863 Alseuosmia macrophylla A. Cunn., Morgan 2141 (WS), AJ236198, , ; Mackinder s.n. 864 (UPS), _, AJ238334, X87377; Crispiloba disperma (S.Moore) Steen., Telford 10654 (CBG), 865 AJ318968, AJ238338, X87382; Platyspermation crassifolium Guillaumin, Stauffer & 866 Blanchon 5710 (UC), AJ419689, AJ496220, AJ419700; Wittsteinia balansae (Baill.) Steenis, 867 Munzinger 4583 (NOU), OL794665, OL794664, OL794663; Wittsteinia vacciniacea F. 868 Muell., Carroll 452 (CBG), AJ318985& AJ318986, AJ238345, X87399; Argophyllum 869 cryptophlebum Zemann, Harrington JD04 (ATH), , , KF496493; Argophyllum nullumense 870 R.T.Baker, Telford 3762 (CBG), AJ318965, ... ; Telford 5462 (CBG), ..., AJ238335, X87379; 871 Corokia cotoneaster Raoul, Chase 2752 (K), AJ235445, , L11221; Taylor 2623 (CBG), , 872 AJ238337, ; *Phelline billardierei Pancher ex Loes.*, M. van Balgooy 7013 (L), , AJ238341, 873 AJ238346; Phelline comosa Labill., Savolainen pco1 (G), AJ235557, _, X69748; Ziesing 289 874 (CBG), , AJ238342, ; *Phelline lucida* Vieill. ex Baill., M. van Balgooy 7034 (L), , 875 AJ238343, AJ238347; Menyanthes trifoliata L., Chase 3501 (K), AJ235533, L39388, L14006; 876 Stylidium graminifolium Sw. ex Willd., Cosner 174 (OS), AJ236201, AF130188, L18790. 877

Table S1 Ni and Mn foliar concentrations (μ g.g⁻¹) measured by X-ray fluorescence (XRF) scanning of Alseuosmineae herbarium specimens from 33 species. See:

https://science.mnhn.fr/institution/mnhn/collection/p/item/search [insert barcode]. LOD= limit of detection

Figure S1. Dated phylogeny resulting from the BEAST analyses based on based on the study of Ramírez-Barahona et al. (2020) [R2020] (topology identical to the best-fit ML tree). Support values at nodes refer to PP, uBV and SH-aLRT, in that order. Median ages are also provided on nodes just below the support values. Horizontal bars on nodes represent 95% HPD of age estimates. Time scale (horizontal) in Ma (Paleo.: Paleocene, Oligo: Oligocene, P: Pliocene). Example plant species photos on the right (from top to bottom): Platyspermation crassifolium, Argophyllum ellipticum, Phelline barrierei.