

# DICROSPINASPHERA

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**Dicrospinasphaera** gen. nov.

*Type species. Dicrospinasphaera zhangii* gen. et sp. nov.

*Etymology.* 'Dicro', meaning forked, 'spina' meaning thorn, and 'sphaera', meaning sphere, with reference to the shape and branching ornamentation of the fossil.

*Diagnosis.* Spherical vesicle bearing solid branching processes. Vesicles about 60  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter; processes loosely arranged, with two levels of regular dichotomous branching.

*Discussion.* There are several genera of branching process-bearing acritarchs described from late Precambrian strata including, *Shuiyousphaeridium* Yan, 1992, *Vandalosphaeridium* Vidal, 1981, *Peteinosphaeridium* Staplin *et al.*, 1965, *Multifronsphaeridium* Zang & Walter, 1992, and *Variomargosphaeridium* Zang & Walter, 1992. The branchings of the processes in these taxa are irregular, and some bear a distinctive transparent membrane covering the branched processes (e.g. *Shuiyousphaeridium* Yan, 1992). In general, the vesicles from these taxa are over 200  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter. The new genus bears dichotomous rod-like processes, the vesicle is about 60  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter, and the distribution of the processes is regular, indicating the new genus is intermediate between simple and complicated process-bearing acritarchs.

